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SIR ROBERT BRUCE COTTON.

London:  
THE COTTON PRESS, GRANVILLE HOUSE,  
ARUNDEL STREET, W.C.

[c.1900]



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## CONTENTS.

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### PREFACE.

### CHAPTER I.

#### FAMILY LIFE IN ENGLAND.

The great Sacredness of Domestic Ties in China.—The Relation between the Chinese Family and the State.

### CHAPTER II.

#### EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

Radical errors about School and University Discipline in the West.—English and French testimonies to the rational system pursued by the Chinese.

### CHAPTER III.

#### “SOCIETY” IN ENGLAND.

The Court.—The Aristocracy.—Their Ideas.—The Evil Influence of Hereditary Dignities on Tastes and Morals.—The Middle Classes.—The Snobbery of the Wealthy Trading Classes.—Morbid Social Excitement.—The more wholesome character of Social Life in China.—Except a very few descendants of Confucius, no Hereditary Nobility in China.—The Chinese Gentleman at home.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### ENGLISH DOCTORS.

Doctors in England.—Doctors in China in Contrast.

545232  
ENGLISH LOCAL

## *Contents.*

### CHAPTER V.

#### ENGLISH LAWYERS.

Lawyers a Danger to Society.—Lawyers Unknown in China.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### "BREACH OF PROMISE" AND "DIVORCE" IN ENGLAND.

Chinese Ideas of Love and Marriage.—Divorce extremely rare in China.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### BACKSHEESH IN ENGLAND.

Servants' Tips.—Christmas Boxes.—Trade Commissions.—  
"Presents" to Government Officials.

### CHAPTER VIII.

#### LIARS IN ENGLAND.

What is a Lie?—Trade Lies.—Social Lies.

### CHAPTER IX.

#### THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE.

Jobbers, Brokers, "Bulls," "Bears," "Stags," "Wild Cat" Bonds, "Puts," "Calls," "Options," "Margins."—Disasters, effects of Stock Exchange Speculation.—English Law makes constant raids on Betting Establishments, and leaves standing the biggest Gambling "Hell" in the world.

### CHAPTER X.

#### DOWNTRODDEN ENGLISH TOILERS.

The People Robbed by their Social Superiors.—Free Trade and Unfair Wages.



## Contents.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### DOWNTRODDEN ENGLISH TOILERS—*Continued.*

Luxurious Capital and badly-housed Labour.—Oppressive Labour Legislation.—Brutalising Influence of English Industrialism.—The dreadful past of the English Agricultural Labourer.

### CHAPTER XII.

#### THE MANUFACTURE OF ENGLISH PAUPERS.

Causes of Pauperism :—(1) Demolition of Labourers' Cottages on large Estates.—(2) Improvident Marriages.—(3) Undiscriminating Treatment of Applicants for Parish Relief.—(4) Deserted Married Women can only compel Husbands to support them by first applying to the Workhouse. — (5) Orphanhood. — (6) Inadequate help and perfunctory alms from Private Benevolence.—Who are Proper Recipients of Charitable Relief?—(7) Intemperance.—(8) Land Monopoly.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN ENGLAND.

British Criminals.—The pickpocket.—Burglar.—Woeful story-teller. —“ Long Firm ”—Pretended Acquaintance.—Fraudulent Rate collectors.—Secretaries, Bankers.—Trustees, Executors, Legal Advisers.—Hall Thief.—Sham Syndicates and Companies.—Bogus Mines—Forger.—Foreign Loan Robbers.—Crimes of Violence.—Effective Punishment must be *Remedial* as well as *Deterrent* and *Retributive*.—Mere vindictiveness to offenders worse than useless.—Prisoners should be Classified with the view of Saving Unconfirmed Criminals.—Bribing Warders.—Gross injustice of visiting Crimes against *Property* with severer punishment than Crimes against the *Person*.—English Criminal Law contemptible.—Death Punishment a preposterous anachronism, —Laotze's view.—The United States far ahead of England in Methods for Preventing Crime.

## *Contents.*

### CHAPTER XIV.

#### THE LAND QUESTION IN ENGLAND.

English Landed Monopolists.—Ruin of English Agriculture by Landlordism.—Disproportionately light taxation of land.—Appalling evils of protection in English Agriculture before 1846.—Iniquity of (1) *Primogeniture*.—(2) *Law of Distress*.—(3) *Game Laws*.—(4) *Worst of all : Law of Entail and Settlement*.—Discouragement of Land Culture.—Mischievous effects on Commerce.—Population driven into Towns, causing Congestion and Misery.—Hope of Improvement from Agricultural Labourers' Unions.—Rural Parish Councils.—The superior Land System of China.

## PREFACE.

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Without needlessly obtruding my personality and antecedents upon my readers, I deem it convenient to state briefly the origin of the present work. Innumerable volumes by English authors have appeared during the past half century, containing criticisms of the institutions, customs, religion, laws, and people of China. In most instances these works are from the pens of the "globe-trotting" tribe, whose superficial impressions of a country and population so vast, ancient, and unique, must be regarded by every cultured Englishman as necessarily worthless. They are ignorant of the language and literature of our great sages and guides in philosophy, history, and romance. They touch at one or two coast towns, and possibly extend their journeys to the capital, but are just as unfit to appreciate the inner life of the people as a blind man would be to comprehend the artistic masterpieces of the National Gallery, or as one who is deaf would be to enjoy the music of a Handel Festival. Among Englishmen who have committed to print their opinions of my great and much misunderstood country, there are some noble and generous exceptions to the rule just alluded to. But the writer would be glad if he could honestly include among the unbiassed authorities who have sought to enlighten England about China, such distinguished British Chinese scholars as Professor Legge, of Oxford, the translator of our "classics," and Professor Douglas, who fills the Chinese

## *Preface.*

Chair at University College, London. Their ability and learning invest them with responsibility for denying justice to China in their criticisms of my country and people.

Up to the present, among the number of educated Chinamen who know the language and literature of the United Kingdom, who have made a considerable stay in this country for diplomatic, educational, or trading purposes, and to whom ample opportunities have been afforded of closely studying its history, institutions, laws, and customs, there is not one who has ventured hitherto to publish in English any detailed account of his observations and experience in this part of the world. But surely, for once, a Chinaman may be pardoned for acting on the old British proverb, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." As English disquisitions on China have always been taken in good part by my countrymen, it is only reasonable to expect that the first analysis of British life ever published in English by a Chinaman should be received in the same spirit by Englishmen. The Scotch poet Burns prays that Heaven would grant us the gift "to see ourselves as ithers see us." A single practical acknowledgment by a Chinaman, in the way referred to, of the frequent services which British critics have rendered China in pointing out national weaknesses which might otherwise have escaped her notice, will not, it is hoped, be considered an officious return for such superabundant attentions.

Though not an Englishman, I claim to have been a quiet but deeply interested student of English life and character in London for a quarter of a century. Owing to favourable social surroundings in my native land, I had the advantage not only of a sound Chinese education, but also of an

## Preface.

extended training in the English language and literature, under a very learned and wise English tutor residing at one of the treaty ports. Although acquainted with Buddhism, Taoism, and other religious faiths professed in China, my father was brought up a follower of Confucius, and I imbibed the Chinese classics, including the "Analects" of the sage, the works of Mencius, the doctrine of Laou Keun, and the Doctors of Reason, almost with my mother's milk. Thus, I can hardly be accused of failing to bring to my adopted country a sound moral standpoint for my prolonged investigations concerning it. In the "King of Books" I learned in early life that "golden rule" laid down by Confucius for the guidance of his disciples 1500 years before the Christian era. "My doctrine is simple and easy to be understood—to have an upright heart, and to love one's neighbour as oneself." Even now I constantly find that noble saying of the disciple Tsentsse coming to my recollection, "The supreme law, the law of moral conduct for man, which contains all others, is perfection. He who cannot distinguish good from evil, the true from the false, who knows not how to recognise in man the mandate from Heaven, he has not arrived at *perfection*." As regards politics, I have looked in vain in all the prominent European writings I have studied on that subject for such lofty ideals as I was happily obliged to lay to heart when a youth from the sayings of our sages. The battle cry of Western Democracies, *vox populi vox Dei*, is no mere cry with the mass of educated Chinamen, though it may sometimes be forgotten by corrupt officials, who are occasionally admitted to the public service of China. These words of Confucius are stamped on the minds of intelligent Chinamen in their tender years: "That which the people

## *Preface.*

consider worthy of recompense or punishment must be that which Heaven or *Divine Reason* would also punish or recompense ;” and the leading principle in Chinese ethics, public and private, is “to be always in accord with that Divine essence from which ancient sages held that man derived his being.” “The Master held that government is epitomised in that which is just and right, that is to say, the realisation of those eternal laws which make for the happiness of humanity. Every family is a small State, and each nation or State a large family ; both the one and the other must be governed on the same principle of love, justice, honesty, and uprightness. A man who cannot control his own passions is not capable of governing his family ; and he who cannot govern his family is equally incapable of governing a nation.”

It is with these time-honoured precepts of Chinese wisdom ever ringing in my ears that I have for many years endeavoured to qualify myself for presenting to Englishmen a Chinaman’s views of British social, political, ethical, and economic life. I have been careful, in addition, to examine with the most competent aids at command, the various shafts, cogs, cranks, joints, chains, and pulleys comprising the complicated mechanism of English national development. I frankly confess that in the following pages I have abstained from panegyric, which, coming from a foreigner, would savour of vulgarity. I have considered it best for the most part to take for granted the countless virtues which adorn every department of English life, and have, with friendly candour, chosen to restrict myself to some of those defects which may perhaps be allowed to go too far in neutralising the nobler tendencies



### *Preface.*

of the British nation. It will be observed that I have deliberately refrained from discussing the manifold varieties of religious faith and ceremony classified under the general head of Christianity. Nor have I allowed myself the satisfaction of delivering judgment upon the merits of the newspaper and periodical press, and other topics of Imperial interest. Should I find, however, that the present volume secures a fair share of public attention, the chapters held over on these and kindred topics can be published in a subsequent volume.

W. C.





## CHAPTER I.

### FAMILY LIFE IN ENGLAND.

I HAVE come to the belief, after a great deal of thinking and observation, that England is honeycombed with disorganisation, and that this is due, in the first instance, to the lack of reverence for the institution of the family and the lack of wise domestic management so common in this country. I do not mean that bad laws and institutions have been set up purposely to breed mischiefs, or that the Parliament or the Government are intentional workers of evil to family life. Nothing of the sort. There are many wise and good people, both high and low, in England. The different ranks of life and grades of position, many customs of society in business and in the family, the ways of "marrying and giving in marriage," of showing attention to the poor in the workhouse and to the sick in the hospital, the exchanges of feasting and dancing between family and family—all this is very pretty, looked at and talked about from the outside. It is not the rules and arrangements which English society has made for itself, like storey above storey in a great and beautiful mansion, from the cellar where the "great unwashed" live from hand to mouth, up to the top flat where the royal family live in luxury and splendour; it is not these things that are in my mind now.

The building is very fine, and so is the ornamentation of it from foundation to roof; nothing disorganised about England in that sense. But knock at the door in each flat and take a good view of what goes on inside, and you will find, I much fear, that the state of the living inhabitants is

not to be judged by the brightness and harmony of the colours on the gables, or the carving on the pillars of the house. The disorganisation is moral rather than political, and can only be called social in a qualified degree. It is a kind of dry-rot in the different sorts of life in each suite of apartments throughout the edifice; though, when the ethical training of the people becomes as elaborate and systematic as their physical and intellectual discipline (defective though the latter be) and theological teaching now are, I believe there will be a very great difference for the better. But how many centuries must pass before this change takes place, Heaven only knows!

Take the case—sadly too common—of a certain kind of family life in England, in which the children get to know more of the fashionable world than their parents ever did. The father and mother began their struggles poor and untrained in knowledge. They made money and sent their boys and girls to “superior” schools, in the fashionable sense, where the children mixed with young folks of a higher social grade than their own. The children “finished” their education with conceited notions which never entered the heads of their plain, struggling parents. The father is dubbed “guv’nor” or “pater” and the mother “mater” by their boys, and their notions of life are ridiculed by their promising offspring of both sexes as “antediluvian.” The simple-minded parents get to think these bouncing young fools wonders in their way. Never having known the manners of “good society” themselves, they are perfectly awestruck to find their children talking with a fine accent and in grammatical phraseology which they never in their earlier days expected to be honoured with in their family. The parents think it a proud privilege to have begotten such a high-flown progeny. They are like the proverbial hen with her ducklings, which paddle where she cannot follow

them. The youngsters soon find out how, metaphorically, the wind blows, and trim their sails to it. They feel that their gratified parents look up to them, and, as a natural consequence, the children are not long before they gather encouragement to look down on their parents. The old folks esteem it almost an honour to be pooh-poohed by such sparkling young specimens of modern gentility. The children, inexperienced in the ways of well-bred old family life, strike out for themselves the path which they fancy will lead them straight to the notice of the so-called "upper" circles, in which by-and-bye they hope to be mercifully smitten with forgetfulness of the cheese and bacon out of which the family fortunes were made, and of the doubtful Queen's English familiar to their ears in the parental shop in their tender years. If they can't show the true ring of "birth" and "breeding," they must at least do all that the help of Birmingham electro-plating can accomplish to imitate the outward style and finish of the genuine article. The services of the most approved tailors, dressmakers, hair-cutters, dancing masters, French teachers, and West End jewellers are called in to polish their natural rawness away.

Then comes what, in conventional parlance, is called their "introduction to society," with the usual complement of balls, parties, mincing, simpering, lisping, and other affected attitudes peculiar to "beggars on horseback." The family name has been Smith, Shufflebottom, or Snooks, and the aspiring generation of newly-rich fledglings smooth and soften these *plebeianisms* into De Smetti, Shalebolton, or Snefton, and cap the climax of folly with full-blown British tuft-hunting snobbery. The girls get caught up by some poor nephews of a lord's grandson or by some poorer baronet's descendants with all the virility worn out of them by *roué*-ism; the only faculty left to these spendthrift husbands of the rich tradesman's daughters in a state of

vigour being the faculty of wasting their wives' money as they had wasted their own. The sons take to the aristocratic pursuits of the turf, by which their purses become very sensibly lightened. So the worthy buttermonger's family goes up, socially, like a rocket, and comes down, morally, like a stick. A great gulf, as between Dives and Lazarus, is fixed between these new accessions to "Society" and their unkempt, clodhopping uncles and aunts and artisan cousins, never again to be crossed. A brand-new crest and a fine old Conservative pedigree are made expressly to order for these scions of classic *grease*, and the ladder by which they rose is summarily kicked away.

They conveniently discover—or, rather, the crest-maker discovers for them—that they had an ancestor who "came over with the Conqueror." They instinctively gravitate to Tory politics as becoming their sudden emergence from social obscurity, in common with most of the home candidates for the charmed circle of English "respectability," and with Colonial Knight Commanders of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, whose ambition lies towards the same refuge for British "cads," who want to throw the public off the scent as to their true origin. The virtues of filial reverence and obedience and affection for relatives are considered beneath their pompousness. And no wonder! when there is nothing in English family or social traditions to foster towards British parents a habitual sense of filial reverence. They have sowed the wind of pride, and they are in imminent danger of reaping the whirlwind of ruin. In many cases they become slaves to champagne and gambling, the prevailing weaknesses of over-fed, under-worked, and self-indulgent "Society" people. It is not long before they are found wallowing in the "horrible pit" of debt, and, ultimately, in the "miry clay" of insolvency. No sense of principle, no knowledge of the true laws of

life, was ever instilled in them. From borrowing, perhaps, they advance to forging, and the next event in their history is either a leap from London Bridge or a trip to Dartmoor Prison—all the result of no philosophic idea of filial duty enforced by father and mother or ever taught their Western ancestors. The complete absence in countless generations of English families of the sentiment that nature, family life, and the claims of national order required of parents any responsible line of conduct towards their children, except what their untamed and capricious frivolity should dictate—this could hardly fail to produce disastrous consequences in the family and the State. The complexion of the latter as regards peace, contentment, thrift, and conformity to law is inevitably determined by the virtues inculcated and practised in the former.

Under a representative system of law-making and government the English Parliament must, on the whole, be the reflex of average Englishmen. Then, what serious friend of his country could hope for much wisdom in a body of legislative representatives sent to Parliament by a nation in which just and wise parental discipline was not enforced by State sanction, but was left at the mercy of ignorant and heartless whims in untrained fathers and mothers?

So with the vast brutalised masses in the United Kingdom, whom a very costly and abortive Education Act—in operation for twenty-seven years—has thus far utterly failed to improve. By a quite unwarrantable measure of personal freedom accorded by law to multitudes of untutored men to marry wives and beget children *ad libitum*—whether they are able to support a household or not—to waste their wages on drunken frolics and extravagant pleasures, to land their families in starvation and cast them adrift on public or private benevolence, to have an almost unlimited host of temptations to vice and crime thrown around them, the



State is practically manufacturing paupers and criminals, when its supreme efforts should be devoted to the prevention of both. Of what value can be the votes of millions having the parliamentary franchise, while hovering on the borders of domestic and social lawlessness, in the election of members of Parliament? What possible chance is there of their sons, brought up under these conditions, choosing men qualified to make and administer laws likely to benefit and elevate the nations? Fools, who are in the majority as voters, must elect a majority of fools as law-makers.

The topsy-turvy system of law in England fails alike to prevent moral disorganisation, and to cure it when it has made headway. It does not touch ill-regulated subjects until they have done hopeless mischief to themselves and others. The law is so far behind the science of the age as only to use the antiquated and imaginary antidote for wrongdoing called punishment, whereas all modern law-reformers regard crime and vice as diseases to be diagnosed and treated pathologically. The infatuation of the English for what they confusedly rant about as liberty makes them content to keep pruning the branches of the deadly upas of crime instead of aiming a blow at its root, by removing temptations to crime which arise from ignorance, poverty, want, drunkenness, constitutional indolence and sensuality, and by holding parents responsible for becoming acquainted with the duties they owe to the bodies, minds, and morals of their children, and by insisting under legal penalty on filial compliance with wise and good parental counsels.

I am bound to admit that if the State is to have the power to effectually uproot lawlessness, there must either be a benevolent Despot at its head, as with us in China, or it must be ruled by a modified State socialism. Not otherwise can it successfully ward off threatened starvation, which so often tempts to theft, by creating employ-

ment for those able and willing to work. In order to separate those constitutionally habituated to vicious or criminal excesses of appetite, acquisitiveness, morbid imagination, or homicidal mania, from those more fortunately organised and circumstanced, duly authorised officers of the State should be armed with power—not to drag to prison and the gallows, which are no remedy, but—to exercise rather physiological and pathological vigilance, that subjects requiring rational treatment might be relegated to the different classes of hospitals set apart for dealing with their respective cerebral ailments and ethical mistakes. Thus it would be found what cases might be restored with safety to society and what others might be deemed incurable and dangerous to society, and ought to be kept under moderate restraint for life. The English Government let as many as choose run straight in the way leading into the executioner's hands for want of a right and enforced view of the relative duties between parent and child.

Having tolerated, and even encouraged, under the false plea of liberty, the career of a snob, the drunkard, the glutton, the sensualist, the wastrel, the thief, the liar, the forger, the seducer, the perpetrator of wanton cruelty, the poisoner, and the murderer, towards gaol and capital punishment, the State makes futile attempts to remedy the error it commits by imprisoning or hanging the wretches whom the idiotic usages of Society have transformed into what they become. There are thousands who return to prison many scores of times after their release. The sapience of locking the stable door after the steed has been stolen is hopelessly eclipsed by this marvellous combination of philosophy and science in the nation which produced Bacon, Blackstone, Shakspeare, Godwin, and Robert Owen; the two latter having taught long before the time of Mill, Bain, and Huxley, that the only liberty possessed by

Englishmen was *liberty to act in compliance with the strongest motives.*

A fundamental omission on the part of parents which is often responsible for the bodily, mental, and moral ruin of their posterity, is that the young people receive no instruction as to the physical conditions on which individual health is to be maintained, on which marriage may be safely undertaken, and on which children, sound in mind and body, can alone be born. The parents have been taught by their parsons, if they go to an orthodox church, that the desire by which the sexes, on reaching puberty, are impelled to come into the closest possible sexual relations, is latent sin inherited by humanity from the alleged "fall" of the first pair in the Garden of Eden ! Following their pulpit guides, they piously refrain from imparting the least information as to the ethics of these relations, either by books or in serious conversation to their sons or daughters, under an absurd fear lest both might be driven by needful physiological knowledge to profligate courses. What is the result ? The sons are in risk of meeting reckless companions who have no theological scruples about initiating them in sexual mysteries, under degrading conditions ; and if they are amenable to the forbidden experiences placed within their reach by the tempter, they soon solve for themselves—and often to the destruction of their health for life—the sexual problem which priest-ridden parents fanatically refused to throw light upon for their guidance. They become afflicted with disease, which taints the blood of their posterity to the remotest ages.

If the family keeps a female cocker-spaniel, Cochin hens, Polled Angus cattle, or a full-blooded racehorse, the parents exercise the strictest care lest these pure breeds should deteriorate by contact with inferior kinds. But if a son—be he virtuous or not—has resolved to choose a wife, the anxious forethought shown in safeguarding purity of breed



in their domestic animals is rarely, if ever, dreamt of in regard to the immunity of their grand-children from hereditary impurity or disease. On the contrary, the paramount question raised is: What is the social status of the family he proposes to marry into? It may become known to the parents of the youth that several relatives of the young lady are scorbutic, or have been demented, or have succumbed to dipsomania, or have been swindlers or homicides. They must be fully aware that hereditary ailments or vices will, under inexorable law, re-appear in the children or grand-children of the married pair. But this consideration suddenly vanishes into thin air, and the all-absorbing inquiry is: What advantage is to be gained by the match, in position or fortune?—as it was with the father of Jack Spiggot, who decided against his marriage with Letty Lovelace in Thackeray's "Book of Snobs." "It is the infernal snob tyrant who governs us all who says: 'Thou shalt not love without a lady's maid; thou shalt not marry without a carriage and horses; thou shalt have no wife in thy heart and no children on thy knee without a page in buttons and a French *bonne*; thou shalt go to the devil unless thou hast a brougham; marry poor, and Society shall forsake thee; thy kinsmen shall avoid thee as a criminal; thy aunts and uncles shall turn up their eyes and bemoan the sad, sad manner in which Tom or Harry has thrown himself away.' You, young woman, may sell yourself to Cræsus; you, young man, may lie away your heart and your life for a jointure. But if you are poor, woe be to you! Society, the brutal snob autocrat, consigns you to solitary perdition. Wither, poor girl in the garret; rot, poor bachelor in your club."

Against all such insanity my countrymen have taken the necessary precautions for thousands of years. On the parents in China devolve the responsibility of choosing who

shall be the life-long companion of son or daughter. Nor is the inducement of any dowry held out by the bride or her parents—as is the degrading custom in the rich middle and upper classes in England—to aspirants for her hand. A dowry is withheld from her on principle that she may be loved by her husband for what she is, and not for what he might get with her. When a young Chinaman falls in love he must let the secret go out to his father before his heart goes out to his lady-love. If the parent permits preliminary matrimonial negotiations he employs a go-between, and to this agent is entrusted a geneological tree of the young man's family. This is to protect persons of the same name from uniting in matrimony, and thus avoid the dangers of what is known as “breeding in and in.” A mutual guarantee is also afforded both the contracting families against becoming allied with hereditary madness or crime. If the young lady's family is disposed to respond, their geneological tree is likewise forthcoming. But no such shameless outrages on reason and nature are ever committed, even by the poorest Chinamen, under cover of marriage, as are of daily occurrence in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and in other English-speaking communities.

I am not going to refer at length to the monstrous injustice committed by the vast majority of even middle-class husbands in occupying the best part of their leisure with professional or commercial friends, or in the smoke-rooms and billiard-rooms of clubs, casting the burden of training their families on the mothers, who alone may take pains to study the various dispositions of the children, and to adapt household discipline to their requirements. This is bad enough. But there is another abyss of British parental neglect still deeper, which produces an appalling crop of evils to the State, but which must also be passed over here without comment. I refer to the not infrequent habit of

well-to-do English husbands and wives, when they become parents, in leaving their children absolutely under the control of governesses and tutors. Their natural protectors in that case simply look upon their children as bores interfering with their social freedom, to be shifted on the shoulders of professional hirelings. No such vicarious performance by parents, of duties to the family, is possible in China. There, the mother is the first and most fondly-earnest teacher of her children. Her ambition is to cherish them and prepare them for usefulness and obedience in a contented, peaceful, and happy life devoted to the family and to citizenship. By them she may be ennobled and honoured, and when such a sentiment takes possession of a wife's heart it becomes a living force.

The father has inherited from ancestors, for thousands of years, the art of affectionate domestic discipline, and the sole aspiration of the mother is to be skilful in the administration of family government. She educates her children, and is content to live for their happiness. If the child breaks the law it is not he but the parents that are punished. The State assumes that if the discipline of home were duly observed the child would be a good citizen. The motive power behind the high moral family system of China is the worship of ancestors, and this is universal. Death does not sever the bond of affection which unites the members of a family. It merely spiritualises and sanctifies it. Every spring and autumn religious ceremonies are held in honour of the departed, and all the members of a family meet to share in these solemnities. Each village has its temple and chapel dedicated to this purpose. All honours conferred by the State, as distinguished by the mode of bestowing nobility prevailing in England, are retrospective and not prospective in their operation. If a public functionary is ennobled, his parents and ancestors participate in the

dignity, but not his descendants. Hence, haughty, pampered, lecherous wearers of hereditary titles are with us impossible.

Look, if you please, at another interesting phase of British domestic relationships. When the brothers and sisters grow up and marry, how many cases appear of members of the same family becoming cold and estranged from each other as they grow older—especially if they vary widely in pecuniary position—when increasing age should draw them closer and make them more affectionate to each other? Not only are the parents despised and forsaken if they are poor, but the brothers and sisters too often leave each other to struggle on without sympathy or help when they most need both, the rich ones turning their backs on those who have been unfortunate, as if honest poverty were a scandal and a disgrace. Or, perhaps, life is spent by them in mutual bickerings—all for want of properly established discipline on the part of the parents, and this again owing to the State Government being deficiently administered. The Chinese have been distinguished time immemorial by their regard for brothers, cousins, and more remote relatives from generation to generation. Then, in a humbler sphere of English society, the sons become mechanics, and take to browbeating their employers; and the daughters enter domestic service, and become so absurdly insubordinate that they assert their supposed rights by wronging their mistresses and spoiling the peace of the household in which they are sheltered, fed, clothed, and earn wages. I do not say that the heads of the home in which a servant labours are always faultless; but anyhow chronic antagonism is constantly springing up in British households between those who rule and those who serve. Rightly or wrongly, complaints are heard on all sides that servants, in spite of all their elaborate Sunday-school training, are found to cheat, lie, and steal, and to be dirty,

lazy, and insolent. There exist no national regulations for bringing up people in the different ranks of life to *rational obedience*; and the infectious spirit of disobedience spreads through every relation and grade. The English theory, I grant, is the opposite of all this; but of what good is a fine theory as long as no adequate appliances are provided for bringing it into harmony with the practice of the nation? The people may pride themselves on having the right medicine for the disease; but it only reveals a state of national muddle, if they keep the medicine in a stoppered bottle on the shelf, as they do, instead of using it. Of what avail is it to learn by heart the words of the Christian Scripture, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right," and "Servants, obey your masters," if the philosophy of these passages is not taught and their contents are not systematically enforced? Disobedience means disorder, and disorder strengthens into a habit and disorganises the faculties, till truth and error, justice and injustice, cruelty and kindness get jumbled up in many minds. The individual badly brought up inoculates the family and the State with the germs of anarchy.

In China filial piety is to the National Constitution what liberty is to the constitution of England. It is with all Chinamen the foundation of everything honourable, kind, sincere, brave, patriotic. They have a favourite proverb that "Of the hundred virtues, filial duty is the chief." To illustrate the nature and importance of this virtue and the rewards attending its cultivation is the object of a book which most young Chinamen read, called "Twenty-four Examples of Filial Piety." At the head of the celebrated "Twelve Sentences of Good Words" stand (1) "You should not disobey your parents," and (2) "You should not quarrel with your brothers." Hence, punishments for filial disrespect or neglect are among the heaviest inflicted by us.



One of our classics is exclusively occupied with the exposition and enforcement of filial piety. In the *Analects* of our matchless and ever-to-be-worshipped sage, Confucius, we have these words: "Filial piety and fraternal submission are they not the root of all benevolent actions? A youth when at home should be filial, and abroad respectful to his elders." Teze-hea (one of the sage's eminent disciples, very learned in the *She-King* and *Ch'un Ts'ew*) said: "If a man applies his mind sincerely in serving his parents with his utmost strength; if in serving his prince he can devote his life; if in intercourse with his friends his words are sincere, although men say that he is not learned, I certainly say that he is. . . . While a man's father is alive, look at the bent of his will; when his father is dead look at his conduct. If for three years he does not alter from the way of his father, he may be called filial. There are few who, being filial and fraternal, are fond of offending their superiors. There have been none disliking to offend their superiors, who have been fond of stirring up confusion." (Book I. § 2, 6, 7, 11.) "In serving parents a son may remonstrate with them, but gently; when he sees that they do not incline to follow his advice, he shows an increased degree of reverence, but does not abandon his purpose; and should they punish him he does not allow himself to murmur." "While parents are alive the son may not go abroad to a distance" (Book IV. § 18, 19). Mang E asked what filial piety was. The Master said: "It is not being disobedient." Fan Ch'e asked: "What do you mean by filial piety?" The Master replied: "That parents when alive should be served with politeness; that when dead they should be buried with devout ceremony; and that they should be sacrificed to with strict reverence." Teze-Yew asked what filial piety was. The Master said: "It means the support of one's parents. But dogs and horses like wise-

are able to do something in the way of support. *Without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other?* . . . . If, when their elders have any troublesome affairs, the young take the toil of them, and if, when the young have wine and food they set them before their elders, is this to be considered filial piety? The Master taught that *all depended on the spirit in which the deed was done.*" (Book II. § 4-8.)

While his parents are alive a son, in China, must continue to obey them. This is the doctrine of the classics, the teaching of the laws, and the universal practice of the people. No matter how old, educated, or wealthy the son may be—unless he has become an official of the Government—he is bound to render prompt and implicit obedience to his father and mother. While in the employ of the State he is subject to the commands of the Emperor, and his parents have no control over him, though he must always conform in every respect to the established laws and customs of the Empire in regard to his parents. But if a man be in a private station, and his parents are still living, they must approve the trade or profession he chooses before he can engage in it; he must account to them for all his earnings and the way in which he spends them. But the people so universally love this law as being the very bulwark of order, virtue, and happiness in the country, that magistrates are very rarely called upon to punish the transgression of it. Society has learned to adapt itself to this filial principle for thousands of years, and it has now become a second nature with us. Moreover, the very sense of the absolute prerogative to be obeyed, held by the parent, impresses him with a corresponding feeling of responsibility in exercising that prerogative; and the prospect of wielding so much power in the family leads everyone who finds himself a parent to think about the duties he owes to his child.

as much as about the duties the child owes him. Besides, the sages, the laws, and the daily practice of China, having for hundreds of generations all tended to the perfecting of family government among us, abuse in any way of his paternal right is the last thing that would enter any father's mind.

Still the humane exercise of fatherly authority is not left merely to the accident of wisdom or folly in the parent. True, the Great Master said: "In regard to the young, I wish you to treat them tenderly" ("Analects of Confucius," Book V., § 25). But in the rare and extreme case of unfilial conduct, should the father bring his son before a magistrate and demand his severe punishment, the maternal uncles of the disobedient son have a right to interfere; and no magistrate would dare to put to death a son charged by his father with continued disobedience without first obtaining the consent of the maternal uncles.

But the crime of reckless and persistent contempt for wise parental authority is looked upon by my countrymen as being so fearful, considering the chaos it would lead to if tolerated among 400,000,000 of people, that we think it best for the good of the community that it should be punished with the *cangue*, and, where the son seems incorrigible, even with death. A man and his wife once joined in maltreating the husband's mother. To mark public abhorrence of such vile criminality as destructive of the fundamental principle of Chinese government, the authorities at Peking had the scene of the dreadful act openly cursed. The active agents in this outrage on the peace of the Empire were put to death; the mother of the wife was bamboosed, branded, and exiled for her daughter's crime; the scholars of the district for three years were not permitted to attend the public examinations, and their promotion was thereby stopped; the magistrates were deprived of their office and banished.



The house in which the offenders lived was dug up from the foundations. The edict adds: "Let the Viceroy make known this proclamation and let it be dispersed through the whole Empire, that the people may all learn it. And if there be any rebellious children who oppose, beat, or degrade their parents, they shall be punished in like manner. If ye people, indeed, know the renovating principle, then fear and obey the Imperial will, nor look on this as empty declamation. For now, according to the case of Teng-chen, wherever there are the like, I resolve to condemn them, and from my heart strictly charge you to beware. I instruct the magistrates of every province severely to warn the heads of families and elders of villages, and on the 2nd and 16th of every month, to read the sacred instructions, in order to show the importance of the relations of life, that persons may not rebel against their parents, for *I intend to render the Empire filial!*"

## CHAPTER II.

## EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.

ORDINARY English ideas about Education, like English ideas about many other social questions, are at the Antipodes of those on similar questions held in China. The faculties of perception and memory are unnaturally and exclusively forced by the system falsely called education in England, and the reasoning and ethical faculties are often left quite untrained.

In no country under heaven have I ever heard or read of the great goddess of *Appearances* being worshipped so generally as here by all classes of society. The frantic attempts of multitudes is to appear to be what they are not. There is one class who want to get credit by the quality of their dress and the size and appurtenances of their houses for being well off when they are really poor. They have a saying, "To be poor, and *seem* so, is the way to remain so." There is another class who want to appear upright, truthful, and correct in all the relations of life; but, instead of sincerely striving to conform to the highest ideals in moral practice, they impose on the credulous by joining some popular church, and leave the impression to be drawn by the superficial multitude that, because they satisfy the cheap standard of goodness in singing hymns, reading prayers, hearing sermons and subscribing ostentatiously to religious institutions, they must necessarily be above suspicion in respect to everyday morals.

So with the inconsistency connected with sending children to the costly schools, colleges, and universities scattered over

the United Kingdom, which are at the disposal of wealthy families and of members of poor families who earn scholarships and exhibitions to these higher fountains of culture. But the *regime* followed in nearly all of these establishments is a semi-barbarous mediævalism which tests the benefits received by the mind—not by the extent to which the thinking power has been quickened, expanded, and guided; not by an enlarged and effective sense of duty, but by the farrago of crude and undigested acquirements with which the pupil is crammed for the sole purpose of undergoing a written examination—a certain fulness and accuracy in which entitles him to a prize or a degree. Yet the possession of these distinctions can at best show not that his whole mind has been strengthened and developed by the knowledge he has gained and the discipline he has undergone, but only that, like a hogshead, his mind has passively received an *olla podrida* of facts, figures, and views, and that when the tap is turned on by the questions in the examination paper, the contents are readily transferable to the pages on which answers to these questions are to be written. Forthwith a man becomes a medallist at his college, and, in due course, an M.A. or B.A., an LL.B. or D.Sc.

With a small brain and a fifth-rate range of mental powers he may succeed in winning these coveted honours, while in all essentials he may go forth into life without real education. He has purchased the right to wear a degree which passes current as the accepted proof and badge of high British education; a gullible public are hoaxed by what rarely proves to be the “outward and visible sign” of any “inward and invisible grace.” The University *imprimatur*, sold for money, dooms its possessor, in too many cases, to life-long self-deception as to the extent of his ignorance. He argues thus with himself, “It is true I sometimes feel intellectually feeble and empty, but this cannot be my true state. Have I

not been examined by duly qualified University examiners, and is not my official certificate of having 'passed' complete evidence that I occupy the first rank in education, having taken my degree creditably?" To the average University graduate his degree becomes not so much a stimulus as a barrier to progress. British Society complacently swallows the illusion. The great end of British life is gained—a class is licensed to *appear* what they are not. The reasoning faculty remains, in most cases, twisted and dwarfed, and the ethical faculty grows utterly awry. Hence questions social, political, and religious, are fairly dealt with only by a small minority of Englishmen.

Practically identical is the result of the elaborate and extensive network of Government Elementary Schools, which are supported at an enormous outlay by British rate-payers. Mr. Forster's Act of 1870, which was expected by its hysterical advocates of the old National Education League to usher in a millennium among the "lower classes," leaves the latter to-day as foul-mouthed, as ill-behaved, as brutal, as sensual, as selfish, as disobedient to parents and guardians, and therefore as truly *uneducated* as they were before the National Education League began its operations!

In China the chief test of true education is that refined *altruism* which is always thinking of how it can avoid trenching on the rights of others, and can promote their convenience and comfort by unobtrusive, graceful, and delicate attentions suggested naturally by the circumstances of the moment, costing nothing, yet adding immensely to the sum of human happiness. There is probably not so large a proportion of crime to population as formerly in England. But the Courts of Justice bear witness to a sufficiently large amount of this still lingering in the great English cities; while commercial cheating is greatly on the

increase. There is also a large overflow of the animal spirits of the masses in the agitations and occasionally the bloody feuds of Trades Unionists and Anarchists with non-unionists and employers of labour.

Thieving, forgery, lying, and other forms of *educated* crime and vice have cast grosser forms of evil-doing into the shade. Mr. Keir-Hardie hit the mark when he said of city men, "They swindle each other and call it business." As for coarseness in taste, speech, and conduct in the rank and file of those who pass through the Government schools, it is apparent in the horseplay, the sanguinary epithets and the savagery of the streets, and the wretched weekly "penny dreadfuls" which crowd out from railway bookstalls the more solid reading of ante-School Board days. This remark applies to a very large section of young people schooled at the expense of the ratepayers. As regards the section having a more intellectual flavour about them, they leave the care of their teachers, in too many cases, with no reverence for parents or the parental office—a full-orbed reflection of the ill-disguised contempt that is felt by John Bull, when he thinks he has risen a little in the world, for those who are obliged to "earn their bread by the sweat of their brow." The traditional British notion of a lady or a gentleman represents a person who, above all things, has means sufficient to dispense with the need of working for wages. Consequently, the first idea of a poor workman's son or daughter, as a rule, on completing their Board School course, is to affect educational superiority to their parents, and seek for a living in some occupation in which they may dress as like their social superiors as possible, and keep as far as they are able from soiling their hands.

So much for the outcome of the great Education Act—to multiply indefinitely the number of poorly paid dignified clerks and factory girls, whose wages are too small to cover



the requirements of their position, to introduce an immense overplus of candidates for post and telegraph offices and for shops—a large “educated” *residuum* taking the broad road of an idle life, to ruin. The supremely important thing of all is missed in their school career—the subordination of school knowledge to the making of obedient and respectful sons and daughters, and to the fitting of them for fulfilling, heartily and honourably, the duties belonging to every relation of life. Herbert Spencer says the first thing every one ought to learn is how to earn a living, and even for this end the boasted and tremendously expensive Act does not directly qualify young folks. Indeed, that is usually the last thing thought of by School Boards.

A Chinaman who knows the ways of his own country cannot help being struck with the odd style in which law-breakers are dealt with in England in connection with the false educational system of that country. You see in the police news that two poor old women have tried to put an end to their starved, ill-used lives by drowning, but they are saved by the police, and are “run in” to the cells to await punishment. A boy, needy and forsaken, hungry and cold, is caught sleeping on a doorstep, in the dark, and the policeman locks him in a dismal prison, with nobody to speak to, and little to eat. A man is arrested for knocking down his neighbour, and, perhaps, killing him. A cashier is taken up for signing his master’s name on a cheque, and applying the money to his own use. These wretched creatures, with many more, are huddled together and brought into court. Behind a desk, on a high bench, sits a judge in gown and wig, looking very thundery, as if he could stop the earth from going round, if its inhabitants did not behave themselves. At this important-looking man I could not help laughing, when I got an insight into the irrational sort of

business he was paid to transact for the State. He hears the charges against the accused men, women, and children. If a jury be impanelled, they listen as solemnly to his summing up as if the verdict to which he is guiding them would lead to the miraculous reformation of the prisoners. But such an object is probably very remote from the minds of both judge and jury. The twofold end, exclusively kept in view, is the proving of the charges and the meting out of appropriate legal punishment. If the culprits are convicted, they go back to herd for days, weeks, months, or years, with a body of criminals in most cases worse than themselves. They are sentenced to hard labour and poor fare, which must inevitably tend to weaken their intellectual and ethical, as well as their physical fibre, and disqualify them from being good citizens on their release.

This is the stupid and irrational end that comes of police, bewigged and begowned barristers, and judges and long-suffering juries. The *real* cause of the bad deeds committed is ignored. The wrongdoers complete their respective terms of imprisonment, and return at length to freedom, without the question receiving a moment's attention whether the State had ever methodically taught them, when young, the laws and the art of obeying them, and saw that they were surrounded with influences calculated to prevent them from falling into the temptations which had previously ensnared them. The fact that imprisonment makes them worse, and that they are more likely to go to jail a second time from having been there before, is never discussed.

The poor women caught jumping into the Thames had bad husbands, whose brutality drove them to attempted self-destruction. Are the husbands to go unpunished, and is nothing to be done to prevent the manufacture of such husbands? The wretched boy suspected of being a robber sleeping on the doorstep! Why not lay hold of those who



should be responsible for his neglected condition—parents or guardians of the poor who stand towards him *in loco parentis*? Why not take Members of Parliament and punish them for not passing a law to ensure such a waif being brought up rightly? Then the forger! Why does not the State enact sumptuary laws to make it criminal for wastefully extravagant people not to live plainly, and not to set a proper example to those having smaller means whom they are tempting by their vain follies to live beyond their income and go deeply in debt or commit fraud?

Why not have a Parliament and Government (if both are thought needful) that will educate the people in those laws most urgent for loyal subjects to know; that will educate them according to the different shapes of their brains, to develop the good parts, and repress the bad ones, and have them put in situations in which their dangerous organs and tendencies will not be quickened by temptations? No; all are treated alike, no matter how divergent their natural tendencies or the paths which lead them severally astray. Doctors are not content to say, "Pain is pain," and treat all pain by the same method. They find out the cause of the pain, for then only can they intelligently prescribe the right cure. The English way of dealing with criminals is as ridiculous—when all the imposing ceremony of law and law-courts is taken into account—as it would be to attempt to cure heart disease by tying a red rag on one's great toe. To give these unhappy individuals meals of bread and water, and harden their fingers by teasing hemp, does not touch the root of their evil doings. They are disobedient to the laws, either because they have been starved into moral as well as physical feebleness, or because they have been neglected by ignorant or indifferent parents or other relatives, or because they have never been taught by the Government, or because their organisation is innately abnormal, or because:

the Government has not removed them out of surroundings which ensure their moral degradation. The wiseacres who rule over the English let the moral dung-heaps stand, and punish the people for catching fever from them. If the British Parliament were to adapt, as far as possible, outward circumstances to the moral health and well-being of the population, many judges, magistrates, and barristers might be dispensed with ; many policemen might be relieved of duty ; many jails and workhouses might be closed.

I cannot sufficiently emphasise the diametrical difference between criminal procedure in England and in China. In the former children are punished for the neglect of their parents and guardians. In the latter parents, guardians, and local officers of the State are punished for the neglect of children. As for lawyers, they are even less known and tolerated in my country than they were in the ideal settlement inhabited by the "Birds" of Aristophanes. The result is that we have far fewer bad citizens in China in proportion to our vast numbers than there are in England. Everybody has the chance to work for a living ; very few of my countrymen are lazy, and, as our wants are few, they are easily satisfied ; except when a province is visited with a protracted drought, we are as contented as well as an industrious people. To keep the citizens from ever forgetting the laws there is a "Book of Sacred Instructions," drawn from the great ancient writings, and read in public by the chief magistrates on the new and full moon days. Part of this book says (I give a translation, as elsewhere, when quoting from our classics) : "In our general conduct, not to be orderly is to fail in filial duty ; in the intercourse of friends, not to be sincere is to fail in filial duty ; in arms and in war, not to be brave is to fail in filial duty." "He who can be a pious son will prove an obedient younger brother ; and he who is both will, while at home, prove an honest and

orderly subject, and in active service from home, a courageous and faithful soldier. . . . Mencius has said : 'Were all men to honour their kindred and respect their elders, the world would be at peace.' "

Of the sixteen discourses read at new and full moon to the people, to guide them and save them from disobedience, the eighth requires especially from them a careful study of the penal laws, and these are published in a cheap form that nobody may be ignorant of them. What a yawning gulf in this respect separates us from the example of "barbarian" England, where the masses have for ages, from a moral and law-abiding point of view, been allowed to grow up anyhow, under vague ecclesiastical sentimentalism, in which many of the clergy only half believe, and towards which the laity hold increasingly an attitude of sceptical indifference. In China we govern on the principles of reason, humanity, and justice. In the Confucian philosophy the relation of princes and people, of government and governed, is penetrated by the grand idea of an intimate relationship and communion between *Divinity* (supreme reason) and mankind. The leading principle of Chinese morality is to be always *en rapport* with that Divine essence from which our ancient sages held that man derived his being. Legal punishments in England, viewed in the light of the writings of Confucius, are not even just, and if English judges had studied the four books of the sage as deeply as they have studied the contradictory medley of English laws, they would "strike," and not again assume their anachronous costume till the duties of their office had been placed on a rational basis.

But the answer to all this from the orthodox English Christian is that it is the glory of his country to promote morality and respect for law by teaching religion. If that be so, it is only to be regretted that better success does not

attend his efforts. Indeed, Bible reading where allowed in Board Schools, and comments on the Bible when practised in Sunday Schools, are, as a rule, as incapable of making obedient children and trustworthy citizens (as the Chinese are) as water poured on the face is of curing lumbago. Our classics appeal to reason. Two-thirds of the English Bible appeals to blind and senseless faith. Nearly all criminals, and lazy servants, and dishonest cashiers, and cheating tradesmen have been instructed in Sunday Schools or in religiously-conducted day schools without being educated in the Chinese sense, *i.e.*, made morally better. All Chinese scholars agree in the oft-quoted view that "it is better to be ignorant and know how to live than to be learned and not know how to live." "The principal object of a school," they say, "is to learn to live in tranquillity and happiness, and nothing more."

To show that no good comes from these priestly schools to the mass of the nation, more than half the people when they grow up leave the priests, and half the remainder, who continue to follow them, do so in part to satisfy Mrs. Grundy's demand for conformity to outward fashionable propriety, and in part to obtain an insurance policy against the great black personage with long ears, tail, and hoofs, invented long ago to frighten the weak-minded or craven-hearted into paying their money, to have guaranteed to them life beyond the grave at a wide distance from this "prince of darkness." But it is a safe game for the priests. Neither they nor the people can know what happens to us after we die. The priests need have no fear of being prosecuted for obtaining money under false pretences. Neither they nor their disciples return to tell how it fared with them after they ceased to breathe. So this unprofitable and false system of education goes on from age to age.

What good, then, does the so-called religious education of

England do? It does not bring capital and labour, masters and servants, into harmony. After about 1900 years of the same faith in the West, there are more badly-trained families, murders, suicides, inhumanities, betrayals, cold-blooded transgression of honesty and justice, idleness, and lying in trade and more class distinction than ever. Yet, if only a grinding and heartless employer of labour gives abundant gifts to support his church and his priest, the strictest pains are taken by compromising preachers not to mention from their pulpits the known wrong-doing he is guilty of in his business. One of the sayings of the second person of the Christian Trinity is: "No man can serve two masters." But the sham religious teaching by which it is pretended that high morality is ensured to the rising generation of England enables hosts of church-goers to perform a feat infinitely more remarkable. Not a few Christians serve not only a master but a mistress; Mrs. Grundy is served six days in the week, and their Master on the Sunday. Hence the startling incompatibility between profession and practice to which the typical English Christian, who tries "to make the best of both worlds," becomes hardened.

When coming back here, after paying a visit to China, some years since, I passed through the Christian City of St. Francisco (California), where 40,000 hardworking, sober, and quiet Chinamen have had a long experience of the persecuting spirit of Christians, who claim to be educated morally as well as intellectually in the most approved fashion. They treat my countrymen like dogs during the week, while on Sundays praying for their conversion to Christianity. They pay missionaries to go and convert them to that faith which carries bad whisky, rotten shirtings, filthy sailors, and cruelty wherever it goes. In that City, a friend told me the custom was for the local bankers and large merchants to go to the Episcopal Church, the jobbers,



who "break packages," to the Presbyterians, and the small tradesmen and artizans to the Methodists.

It is much the same in England, and the education which represents the Deity as dividing up His intelligent creatures into Churches more or less influential, according to the wholesale or retail character of the business of their members, or according to their social position, must be fallacious and effete. These several classes, and the Churches to which they belong, seem to have a quiet understanding that the rich and better informed in history, science, and literature may turn up their noses at the poorer and more ignorant members of what they delight to call all the same "the redeemed family of God." The well-to-do church-goers have also a curious arrangement by which they may eat and drink much at each other's table while fortune smiles on them, but when money flies away from any hospitable fellow-worshipper, the victim of misfortune is allowed to "ride quarantine" in his poverty all alone (*à la* Timon of Athens), without any of the praying, psalm-singing, and good-dinner hunters doing anything to help him to get bread for his family. Poverty is looked upon as a social leprosy among the religiously-educated of the British middle and upper classes, although there are noble exceptions to this rule; and it is considered very ill-behaved of any of his dinner-loving friends to make any sacrifice for the benefit of even a worthy quondam downfallen host, or for such a man to show himself at dress-dinner parties till his leprosy is gone. The disease may be removed by starvation, in which case the prosperous dinner-loving people pull a politely elongated countenance, and sigh that the sufferer could not, somehow, have been saved from the grave. Or the leprosy may be cured by the poor stricken patient becoming once more a favourite of fortune. In the latter case he is invited, as before, by ostentatious Christian diners

out to their houses, and receives many expressions of sympathy on account of the trials through which he has passed, just when, by a singular coincidence, he does not happen to want it. But it is deemed rude to refer to the fact that they were forbidden by the customs of polite society to help him out of his troubles.

I well know that many useful things are taught here under the head of secular education. But I repeat, without fear of contradiction, that the true Confucian idea of education is left out; I mean the relation and duties of the subject to the State and to the community; the government of the whole mind; the practice of truth in thought, speech, and action; the control of the appetites and passions; unselfish sympathy with the wants of relations and friends; to say nothing of those only civilly or racially related to us. Of what avail is increased wealth to the rich, and better pay to workmen, so long as chaos reigns in their minds? The standard of living in the latter class—so long as they are uneducated in the true sense—will grow with the advance of their wages, and they will only want more, while as far from contentment and happiness as ever. I have for many years been looking for Christians who come up to this idea of Confucius, but have rarely found them. If there should be one here and there in England, it is not because, but in spite of their religion, that they approach the Confucian standard. As Christians, their time is largely taken up with fighting fellow-Christians over theological hairsplittings, standing up for one sect and pulling down another.

British education has completely perverted the idea of virtue, which the Latin language (*virtus*) formerly represented to be the halo of noblest manhood. Now the term is conventionally applied no longer to the (*vir*) man, but to the opposite sex, and is mainly confined to abstinence by women.



from cohabitation with men, under conditions which neither law nor "respectable" custom sanctions. Morality, too, has become so corrupted and restricted in meaning that in nine cases out of ten it has simply become synonymous with proper relations between the sexes. In China we have an universal system of education, with results totally opposed to those I have depicted above. We Chinamen, whatever may be thought of our form of government, do not humiliate ourselves so far as to ask the State to erect school-buildings and pay teachers all over the land. Education is obligatory upon all, and parents are bound to provide for their families the means of instruction at their own expense. They voluntarily and cheerfully respond to legal requirements in the matter, with the result that nearly the whole of the inhabitants of China beginning their teens can both read and write. The Chinese educational system was spoken of as an ancient one in a work written before the Christian Era. Its object is to popularise knowledge, especially the science of wise and right living, in every sphere of life among the great mass of the people, and to eliminate from that mass whatever special talent may be suitable for the service of the State. The Government concerns itself only with the *method* of education. This is prescribed in what is called the "Holy Edict," issued by the immortal Emperor, Yong Tching. The State, which is more truly Democratic, in the best sense of that word, than the freest country in Europe or America, confines itself in respect to education to holding competitions for literary degrees and appointing learned officials to conduct examinations.

Socially, the people of China are divided into four classes, which rank in an inverted order to the same in England. There are (1) the literates; (2) agriculturists; (3) manufacturers, and (4) merchants. In England the highest class is composed of hereditary aristocracy, who, true to barbarous-

feudal tradition, usually take their titles from the lands which in too many instances have been filched by their ancestors from the nation. With the exception of a few surviving descendants of Confucius, who are held in special honour, we know no privileged distinction except what is based on personal merit. As already stated, it is dead ancestors who are ennobled by the meritorious deeds of their living posterity with us. *The two first-named in the above list of classes, viz., literates and agriculturists, are those who take, among us, the highest social rank.* But in England, talent and learning go for little in "Society" without what is falsely called "birth," or the possession of wealth. Agriculturists in England are treated by idle parasitic and aristocratic landlords as "clodhoppers," and are nicknamed "Chawbacon" and "Hodge."\* Manufacturers come next in order, because they are *producers*, although, in comparison with farmers, they are accounted of a secondary character. Merchants we regard as of quite an inferior grade, because

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\* "There are few sights," says Mr. Fortune, "more pleasing than a Chinese family in the interior engaged in gathering the tea leaves, or indeed in any of their other agricultural pursuits. There is the old man, patriarch-like, directing his descendants—many of whom are in their youth and prime, while others are in their childhood—in the labours of the field. He stands in the midst of them, bowed down with age. But, to the honour of the Chinese as a nation, he is always looked up to by all with pride and affection, and his old age and grey hairs are honoured, revered, and loved. When, after the labours of the day are over, they return to their humble and happy homes, their fare consists chiefly of rice, fish, and vegetables, which they enjoy with great zest, and are happy and contented. *I really believe that there is no country in the world where the agricultural population are better off than they are in the North of China. Labour with them is a pleasure, for its fruits are eaten by themselves, and the rod of the oppressor is unfelt and unknown.*" "*Wanderings in China*," page 202. I prefer to quote this pleasant testimony from an English traveller, who certainly had no temptation to flatter my countrymen.

they *produce nothing*, but only follow the less honourable calling of buying and selling articles which the skill and labour of others have created. Merchants in Great Britain too often grow rich by trickery, and generally for no higher reason than their wealth are they sometimes raised to the peerage. With the help of their money bags, and extreme conservative politics, moreover, they are able to marry their sons and daughters into noble families.

It is from the literates that the most important Government offices are filled in China. The degrees for which they compete are three in number—bachelors, licentiates, and doctors. Between three and four hundred literates are annually appointed, and they are eligible for the higher examinations for the four superior categories, which entitle the successful competitors to become academicians, to enter the diplomatic service, and to be received into the public service. What a contrast to England, where senior wranglers of Cambridge, and double firsts of Oxford, have frequently to go and bury their talents in India or the English Colonies to keep them from starving! Sometimes four or five poor brothers in a Chinese family work very hard to support the sixth brother at his studies, in the hope of his bringing honour to the family; and even old men of eighty go up to our University examinations, and, owing to their enthusiastic efforts to “pass” and win honours in which their revered parents and ancestors may participate, they have been known to expire of excitement in the ordeal. While the Government at Peking provide, in the manner indicated, for the enlightenment of the people, philanthropic citizens voluntarily join in the cost of printing cheap copies of the great Chinese classic moral works, which they give away in scores of thousands to spread the knowledge of right living, without which, in conjunction with right thinking, education is an empty name. The works of Confucius, with the

Commentary of Choo-foo-tsze, in six volumes (400 leaves octavo), can be had for ninepence ; good novels of 1500 leaves, in twenty volumes, can be had for half-a-crown (English money).

In China there are more books and more readers than in any part of the world. Most of the books are written to make the population honest, brave, reverent to parents, and good citizens. Even the laws and commandments in the English Bible seem obscure and imperfect compared with those handed down to us from our sages. Our everyday moral books for the teaching of children and adults warn us against fornication, murder, swearing, lying, deception, disobedience to parents, envy and jealousy, and teach us not to quarrel with our brothers, not to drown female infants, not to wound the conscience, not to get money by false pretences, not to have bad tempers, not to beat down articles of merchandise below the fair price, not to forget to do all the good we can, not to take more advantage of the widow and the orphan, not to oppress the poor, not to be ungrateful for good done us by others, not to charge high interest for money, not to take part in indecent theatrical plays, &c. &c.

We had the printing press five hundred years before it was known in the West, and we have so much reverence for pure literature that we post on the walls of cities, in shops, and by the wayside bills, by tens of thousands with these words on them : "Reverence lettered paper," for every letter and word written with pencil or pen with us is sacred. The letters of our alphabet we call "the eyes of the sages," and "the tracks the sages have left behind them." Those who don't show reverence for lettered paper we call "blind buffaloes," and there is a saying in China that such persons will be born blind in the next world. We have societies whose one object is to send men through the streets and

lanes to gather up all the scraps of lettered paper that may have fallen on the ground, and these are solemnly burned in a furnace made for the purpose. The ashes of the burnt lettered paper are collected and carried in solemn procession to the river and poured in. In their wealth and rank-worship the English may call this "heathenish," but I say that it comes from the grand ruling passion in my countrymen, as a whole, to acquire practical knowledge, honour everything belonging to it, and live by it.

The Chinese civil and social hierarchy rests not on seniority but merit. In China, the highest functions in the State are open to the poorest subject, and this is the secret of the stability of the Empire. Even the bride of the Emperor, when he marries, is chosen from among the lady literates. My fellow-countryman, Colonel Tchong-Ki-Tong, long a distinguished officer of the Chinese Embassy in Paris, has written a book which all Englishmen who want to understand the superior quality of Chinese education should read (*Les Chinois peints par Eux-memes. Paris: Calman Levy*). The learned author writes: "We shall never be sufficiently civilised to comprehend an education more perfect than our own." He claims for Chinese civilisation that it is entirely of home growth, and owes nothing to other nations like that of Western Europe. The latter, he reminds us, is comparatively a thing of yesterday. In China, "poetry in all its forms of civilisation, from the epic to the idyll, the drama and the comedy, the art of oratory, fiction, metaphysics in all its branches, legislation, politics, and the numerous institutions of the country, were each and all represented by masterpieces of their kind, two thousand years before the illustrious epoch of Louis the Fourteenth in France."

M. de la Vernède, a French writer, pays a tribute to the education of my countrymen, which, coming from a



foreigner, is the best certificate that can be produced of the high stamp of its quality. The fruit of much English education consists of torrents of superficial newspapers, histories, poems, novels, scientific, metaphysical, and theological wrangling, political and economic chaos, profitless parliamentary and party babble, and interminable litigation. Side by side with this reign of confusion, extending over centuries, we have startling contrasts between extravagant displays of wealth and bloated luxury, with its attendant vices, on the one hand, and unpitied misfortune, squalor, poverty, want, and suppressed anarchy on the other. M. de la Vernède states that "the frugality, sobriety, patience, activity, honesty, and industry of the Chinese endow them with a power of labour surpassing that of nearly all the nations of the Western World." A writer in the Consular service of Great Britain, who lived among the Chinese for eight years, is quoted by Colonel Tcheng-Ki-Tong as stating that they are "indefatigable in their work, sober, and happy." The illustrious Dr. Medhurst, who knows China and Chinamen better than he does England and Englishmen, and whose name is a tower of strength among Europeans interested in China, writes:—"The number of individuals acquainted with letters in China is amazingly great. . . . Some far exceed their companions. . . . Wealth, patronage, friends, or favour are of no avail in procuring advancement; while talent, merit, diligence, and perseverance, even in the poorest and humblest individual, are almost sure of their appropriate reward. This is their principle, and their practice does not much vary from it."

Again, the same writer says, "It has been the habit with some travellers, newspaper correspondents, and other hasty observers, who have ventured to write about China, to pander to the preconceived notions of their readers by mocking at the pretended mental and moral characteristics

of the Chinese, and representing that, with all their loud talking about codes and maxims of renowned sages, they are practically and without qualification a dishonest, treacherous, cowardly, cruel, and degraded people. But it is as false as it is unmanly so to picture them. As a matter of fact, and making due allowance for the proportion of evil which must exist in every community, they regard the writings of their sages with all the reverence which we give to Bibles and liturgies in the West, and in the main carry out the excellent principles therein laid down most strictly in their social economy and personal relations. How otherwise could vast communities exist, as they do in China's thousand cities; person and property secure, peace, happiness, and plenty universal; education encouraged, local and general trade flourishing, business contracts sacred, poverty exceptional, and vice only to be found if sought out in its own special haunts? It is true, famine and flood periodically devastate huge tracts of country; rebellion decimates whole provinces from time to time; official rapacity and cruelty find their victims, alas! too frequently; cases of robbery, murder, infanticide, embezzlement, abduction, and other crimes are not uncommon; gambling houses, brothels, and opium dens thrive, and are winked at by the executive; and opium-smoking has its votaries in the most respectable family circles. But all these blots and blisters upon society are, in China as elsewhere, exceptions, not the rule; and they are apt to attract the observation of the superficial traveller or bookmaker, while he shuts his eyes to, or purposely ignores, the background of the picture, where may be seen the Chinaman, as he is at home, an intelligent, patient, hard-working, frugal, temperate, domestic, peace-loving, and law-abiding creature."

Such are the testimonies of well-informed Christian Europeans who have an intimate acquaintance with China,



and whose opinions are not likely to be biassed in her favour. I frankly admit that we want more integrity in our executive. But our social and domestic system is so admirable that the faults of Government officials do us, as a people, but little harm.

But hard work and austere ethics, without relaxation, would have the effect of making the Chinaman a dull fellow. His education, however, enables him to enjoy innocent pleasure with jest, and to cultivate the refining influence of æsthetics. Official birthday and popular *fêtes* are enjoyed by him, with a simple *abandon* resembling that of childhood. Passionately fond of flowers, the Chinaman invests these "stars of the earth"—as he calls them—with attributes and allegorical meanings full of poetry. Each flower possesses its anniversary. Invitations are addressed by one family to another to come and contemplate a beautiful moonlight, a ravishing view, a rare flower. Nature always forms part of the entertainment, which winds up with a banquet. In the summer time excursions made into the country are very popular, as also water parties on the rivers. These usually take place in the evening on board of boats gaily decorated with flowers, and bands of female musicians are engaged to heighten the pleasure of the hour. My learned friend, the Colonel, whose diplomatic position in Paris has given him access to the best circles in that city, describes the recreations of the most select society in the French capital as "wearisome, artificial, frigid, and dreary in the extreme, compared with the cultured relaxations of China;" the only exception he makes being in favour of artists. "To be one of them," he says, "is the only condition on which I would consent to become a European."

The Chinese idea of education, in short, is very much that of the Romans in one respect. It is *educement*—a

drawing out of the powers in harmonious development ; and he who has the most fully and harmoniously developed powers of mind and most fully and harmoniously developed powers of body, is the true gentleman, the *kalos kai agathos* of Plato. To reach this issue we consider the three grand essentials to be the best teachers, the most suitable textbooks, and the strictest application of what we learn, in the midst of favourable domestic and social surroundings, to efficiency and elevation in physical, intellectual, and moral life. We believe in no religious incantation, no episcopal manipulation, no supernatural "grace," no holy book to educate men morally.

We recognise in every child's mind distinctive and predominating tendencies. These, the thoughtful among our teachers ascertain by indices, craniological, physiognomical, physiological, and psychological. Every male head of a Chinese family has the genealogical tree of his ancestors, and is more or less acquainted with their respective hereditary idiosyncrasies for generations. These idiosyncrasies the father and the teacher keep in view as not unlikely to be reproduced, in some form, in the family, so that they may be encouraged or repressed according to circumstances. In intelligently-conducted Chinese schools the unsympathetic, selfishly-disposed child has conditions planned for his special benefit and adapted to his moral wants. He is guided to study the lives of the unselfish and morally heroic, and brought purposely, by his teacher, in contact with spectacles fitted to quicken the virtue in which he is naturally deficient. The companionship of the most delicately-minded and disinterested of his school-fellows is chosen for him. So is each moral imperfection dealt with under school discipline, with all the care with which a surgeon watches and operates upon a wound till it is healed. The hardheaded youth in whom the imaginative

element is defective is exercised continuously in discriminating the merits of æsthetic compositions—varied forms of beauty in works of art and fiction. The pupil who has inherited deficient sentiments of honour, truthfulness, and justice, is suddenly, and from time to time, placed by his masters in circumstances calculated to thrust habitually, yet tenderly, but prominently, besetting moral faults upon his notice, till a sense of shame and disgust induces in him efforts to subdue them. So with the subjugation of all other innate crooked propensities in the Chinese youth.

## CHAPTER III

## "SOCIETY" IN ENGLAND.

SOCIETY, as conventionally understood throughout Europe, and especially in England, could never be grafted on Chinese civilisation. We in China know no conception of nationality except that of a family with a father at its head, who undergoes a long and serious training to qualify him for fulfilling Imperial responsibilities to his children (who are also his subjects), a training fashioned on patterns extending back to far-off primeval times, and which have been slowly and gradually improved upon by the experience of generations. So severe and elaborate is that official training, so suggestive is it at every step of momentous Imperial duty, so solemnly have heirs apparent to the throne of China taken to heart the study of their relations and their duties to the people of whom they are the recognised rulers, that if they should chance to have the organ of personal vanity largely developed when they begin the preparatory discipline they have to undergo, there is little of it that is not levelled down when that discipline is ended.

Although the Imperial power is nominally autocratic, its administration is so hedged round by recorded precedents, rules, sanctions of political advisers, and many other restrictions, that, practically, the Emperor has less freedom of personal action than almost any of his subjects. Like them, he is under traditional principles and regulations, handed down from a remote antiquity. From the dawn of his faculties he is taught that he is simply the visible em-

bodiment of those principles, and that by them alone, and not by his own caprice, is he to be guided. From his childhood down to his death he is habitually taught to realise that his viceroys, governors, magistrates, and armies, as well as the hundreds of millions of his subjects, have claims as grave upon the best, most earnest, and most intelligent services he can render as he can possibly have upon their loyalty; and in general this view puts all his powers in tension. He holds himself, in the interests of his people, as the organic medium through which reason and justice, as applied to the government of the nation, find formal expression. His functions are too serious to admit of being mixed up with the astounding gewgaws of *levées*, drawing-rooms, court dinners, balls, and other stupendous, but senseless, exhibitions of "full-dressed" buffoonery prevalent around European thrones. His counsellors, for thousands of years, have regarded the public business entrusted to them of promoting the order, peace, and contentment of China, in too solemn a light to be ever in a mood to play the rôle of semi-harlequins, and to allow their wives and sisters to become semi-nude and bejewelled illustrations of barbaric fashion, as when the Queen of England receives *debutantes* at Buckingham or St. James's Palace, floating on waves of silk and satin.

There is no society whatever in China after the English model. As has been already stated, we have no social institutions based on "birth," "rank," "pedigree," wealth, or on any other merely artificial distinctions. Circles of average intelligence are usually large, because of the felt sacredness of the relationship of consanguinity, and the ties of heart and duty which bind relations, near and remote, together. These circles, while preserved unbroken by relationship, are enlarged from the outside by the addition of friends of the individuals and families who are

held together by the duty they mutually owe of a common worship rendered to their ancestors. The circles, thus enlarged, are more than wide enough for the formation of individual friendships based on mental affinities in taste or pursuits in life. Such friendships, proceeding under the operation of the law of mental homogeneity, in feeling, in intellectual preferences, or in ethical or æsthetic aims, are found by my countrymen to be abundantly satisfying. They are perfectly happy in understanding their friends, and in being understood by them. Any ground for reciprocity of soul less genuine than this they would abhor as a desecration and mimicry of the Divine Reality of friendly reunion. Hence they would only loathe hollow imitations of true hospitality and regard displayed in "Society," as constituted in the United Kingdom—society, the centre of which is the reception-room of the Sovereign, and the circumference of which is the Mansion of the *nouveaux riches*.

"Society," which admits a person on the ground of his having received a new-fledged knighthood, purchased by obsequious services, or by financial aid given to a political party, or on the strength of a baronetcy which has descended from the mistress of some long-departed dissolute monarch, or even because of a peerage granted to some ancestor who won a battle on land or on sea, must sooner or later become wormwood and gall to honest-minded men and women by virtue of the heterogeneous and corrupt elements of which such society is composed, and the motives which have brought these elements together. So, if persons are admitted to this charmed circle, because they are Members of Parliament, that unique source of law in Western Europe at once becomes diverted from its proper purpose by unscrupulous social parasites who are willing, when they have amassed the amount of wealth necessary,



for the most part, as a passport to the House of Commons, to profess any politics and any religion which will bring them nearer to the centre of society and the fountain of social honours.

The hopeless illogical incoherencies of Western “Society,” dependent mainly for its attractions and its *solidarité* on official receptions given by the Sovereign, has not escaped the attention of some able Europeans themselves. Herr Max Nordau, in his “Konventionelle Lügen der Kultur-Menschheit” (Conventional Lies of Civilised Mankind), with Edouard von Hartmann and Baron von Hellenbach, in their writings, have exposed the idiotic tendencies of “Society” to which reference has been made. But the author first named, not without reason, looks upon Constitutional Monarchy as “the most nonsensical institution of the nineteenth century.” For Nordau, as for Bismarck, there are only two logical forms of Government—a Republic or an Absolute Monarchy ; there is no third form. The former authority declares that Constitutional Monarchy, which is one of the most proudly-cherished inconsistencies of England, seeks to blend two political forms utterly incompatible. If human affairs were governed by logic, and not by inertia and Conservatism, “this irrational idea of a Constitutional Monarchy” could not, according to Nordau, exist for an hour. Constitutional Monarchy, claiming to be established by “the grace of God”—the stock phrase borne in the superscription upon the coins of the realm—is nothing short of a profanity of the rational consistency we should naturally ascribe to a Being held by His worshippers to be perfect. The system, says Nordau, “can only be comprehended by sacrificing the faculty of thinking.” The expression is strong, but it can be justified. If monarchy has any *raison d’être* at all, it must, to satisfy logic, be surrounded by autocratic institutions.



It is not in this place, however, that I propose to discuss the preposterous theory of Constitutional Government, with its eternal Parliamentary hairbrained chatter, and the rush, fever, and seething confusion with which it ferments the whole Anglo-Celtic Empire of the Queen. It is the fundamental proposition on which this high-bred political system rests, as connected with the structure of "Society," to which I wish to call attention—"the Sovereign reigns, but does not govern." This is a distinction worthy of the clearheaded and pious nation that sends batches of missionaries to "convert" the "heathen" Chinese! It urgently raises the question as to whether a brain-softening process has not begun, and that the diet of the English public should not be changed by Act of Parliament. Their great modern "Constitutional" authorities, Hallam, Earl Russell, Sir Henry Maine, Bishop Stubbs, Mr. Green, and Mr. Crozier, all crowd over the reduction of the Queen to a mere lay milliner's figure, and dispenser of *recherché* dishes, music, and dancing to her titled and wealthy subjects as one of the noblest achievements of political reform.

No treatment of a sensible, cultured, good-hearted lady could be more ungallant. Her Most Gracious Majesty's "advisers," as her ministers are euphemistically called, take the whole responsibility of administering the affairs of the Empire upon their own shoulders, and make it appear, in words, that Her Majesty does the work. Yet, if she or her family were to obtrude themselves in enacting laws, or putting these in force, or in performing any of the official duties her ministers fictitiously credit her with doing, she and her family would be forcibly restrained or expelled. They obtain from Parliament, every year, £385,000, which is placed at Her Majesty's disposal for maintaining her palaces and equipages, her cattle, and her pageants. They vote £156,000 a year for the support, in becoming dignity,

of her sons and daughters, with their families. Half a million more might be added for sundry expenses paid by the nation in connection with royalty. One of her sons—solely by privilege—got a high annual salary over and above the large settlement he received from the country when he came of age, as an admiral. Another of her sons has been treated with similar liberality. He is a general, and, with his naval brother, might have been content with his Parliamentary allowance, and let poorer men draw the income he appropriates from "the service." Her venerable and jovial cousin, who was never free from the risk of fainting at the thought of going into battle, held a highly responsible position and a magnificent salary as commander-in-chief of the army, which, in equity, ought to have gone to some other officer on the ground of strict military merit.

Having lavished superabounding financial liberality on the Monarch from the contributions of rich and poor, and from a source of revenue technically known as "Crown lands," her advisers and her Parliament say to her in effect, "Now go and enjoy yourself; attire yourself and your family in the most gorgeous robes; drive about in the most splendid carriages, drawn by the finest horses; let the dazzling glory of gold and silver shine on your dinner tables; entertain your subjects of 'birth,' position, and wealth, with profusion. Make it appear from the daily publication of your Court circular that you are overwhelmed with official engagements. We will do all that is necessary and take all the responsibility on our own shoulders, while you shall have the reputation of ruling, although only permitted to reign as the head of fashionable society."

The Government of England resolves itself very much into Teufeldrösch's "Philosophy of Clothes;" in other words, childish display, which the nation would not tolerate, if it were highly civilised in the true sense. I was always

taught when a boy that the nations most fond of grand clothes, gold and silver ornaments, richly decorated houses, flash and glitter, were really barbarous. That view is also strikingly conveyed by so wise and good a man as Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*, whose remarkable talent and excellence did not save his head from the block under that royal butcher whom he vainly tried to serve and satisfy, and whose favourite amusement was decapitating his wives and his most able and useful subjects. The genuine and sensible inhabitants of Utopia, when they saw foreign ambassadors ride through their capital amidst a blaze of golden ornaments, charitably thought they had been let loose from a lunatic asylum; especially as gold with the citizens of the ideal State was a metal only worthy of being used in the manufacture of utensils of the meanest character, and of toys for children.

The effect of the sound moral philosophy of Confucius and Mencius—notably that of the She-King, with which the Chinese are familiar from childhood—is to make the personal tastes and habits of the people simple and unambitious, and kindle an enthusiasm for the proper regulation of the individual and collective mind of the community as the true secret of social enlightenment and happiness. To hear some encomists of the British nation, one would fancy that English people as a rule entirely fell in with our ideas on these subjects. But they talk one thing and live another, whereas the speech and conduct of Chinamen in this respect, up to the very Emperor himself, are mostly in harmony. It is only on rare ceremonial occasions that Chinese ladies and gentlemen dress elaborately, and then never to mix in crowds, but only to be seen by their families and private friends. Learning, wisdom, useful industry, and refined recreation or amusement are the objects supremely respected by my countrymen, while mere grandeur is ridiculed as vulgar and foolish.

and as in no way conducive to the interests of a well-balanced mind. Accordingly, the man of simplest dress in the whole empire is the Emperor, and his plain and modest attire is justified on the ground that the lily needs not to be painted nor the sun to be made brighter by the assistance of gas and tallow. The personal greatness of my Sovereign and the sublime dignity of his position as the Emperor of the largest and wisest, most happy, peaceful, and orderly population in the world, would only sink into frivolity by his piling on fine clothes, crown bestudded with jewels, scarlet, satin, or ermine, and surrounding himself with a host of men fantastically, and women often indecently, dressed. But this is contrary to extravagant English tendencies in Great Britain, India, or the British Colonies. Merely to construct the show commemorative of the proclamation of the Queen as Empress of India, to which despised upholsterers and tailors\* chiefly contributed at Delhi, when the late Lord Lytton was Governor-General, there was an unpardonable expenditure of £50,000. The private expenditure and public taxation borne by the patient, good-natured British masses in connection with the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee, baffle all Mongolian arithmetical effort to comprehend.

If the preference of the British Parliament was taken by vote to-morrow, as to whether Her Majesty should always open a new Parliament in person, it would be found that even in the House of Commons the majority would be on the affirmative side, for the sake of the paraphernalia by which the Queen would be attended.

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\* Although the Court and the aristocracy are so dependent for the efficient display of their rank on tailors, with shameless ingratitude any Englishman is allowed with impunity to call a tailor "the ninth part of a man."

Although "honourable Members" must know that she has no personal liking for external flourish, most of them would be delighted to see her ride, once a year, from Buckingham Palace to the House of Lords behind four pairs of cream-coloured horses and postilions, all stiff with silver gilt and tinsel, under the superfluous guardianship of a host of fellows in mediæval attire. Probably they would exclaim in their accustomed phrase, "how thoroughly English" for her to sit mutely on her throne while the elaborately bewigged and begowned head of the law department reads a speech equivocally called the "Queen's Speech," containing little else than a string of well-nigh formal and pointless phrases. It was on such an occasion that I witnessed for the first and last time her presence in the "gilded chamber" about the year 1866.

Go to a levée or a drawing-room of Her Majesty, and the dominant elements which obtrude themselves oppressively in all directions are the products of the jeweller, the milliner, the clothier, and the furniture warehouseman. What sacrifices of money, time, and personal comfort will the minions of the throne and eager aspirants of royal favour not make to see and be seen at one of these cold, crowded, solemn, and gorgeously adorned gatherings. Ladies and gentlemen of all ranks will patiently submit to be squeezed, and have their corns trodden on, merely to enjoy the fleeting satisfaction of kissing the monarch's hand, and to outvie some haughty rivals in splendour. I have heard of ladies whose costly trains have been accidentally torn off on such occasions by the spurs of some brusque old army officers, who only requited the groan of the wearers' angry sorrow at the accident by the use of language too vigorous to be repeated in print.

There have been too many royal personages on the British throne in the past who were manifestly unqualified



by nature and by training for the performance of their duties when they had more power than is ever likely to be conceded to British sovereigns again. With the exception, chiefly of Henry II., Edward I., and Elizabeth, English monarchs, since the Norman Conquest, have either been cruel, cunning, cowardly, sensual, arbitrary, or despicably feeble-minded. Yet they wielded authority over the lives and property of their subjects, often setting law and justice at defiance; and now, when the English have a sovereign who has reigned beyond the period of any predecessor, and has kept her character free from scandals rife in previous reigns, the substance of regal power is taken from her, and she is left with the shadow. It is surprising that Her Majesty does not protest that in thus being reduced to a cypher and an automaton, whose speeches express alternately the conflicting sentiments of Tories and Liberals, she is humiliated beyond what her self-respect can longer bear. Will the Prince of Wales, when his turn comes, complain to the Government of the day that his dignity is intolerably wounded by being used as a mere puppet of party? Will the attempted preservation of the mere shadow of power survive till the Duke of York comes to the throne, or will there be a throne in England then, at all, or only a Republican president's chair?

The peers, standing next to the monarch, constitute the Brahmins of British "Society." They are revered by a large class of grovelling worshippers of English rank as "blue-blooded." Not a few of these vainglorious hereditary aristocrats have done honour to their rank by their abilities and their character; but no thanks to their ensnaring surroundings so provocative of gluttony, insincerity, and animalism, suggestive of illicit amours and the divorce-court. As with English sovereigns, it is but a small minority doomed to the unwholesome lives of peers, who have escaped the



intellectual perversion and moral corruption which mark their order. Among dukes, marquises, earls, and viscounts, English history embalms the memories of some of the greatest scoundrels the world has ever produced. Yet the peerage is recruited, sometimes, from the liberal party. The Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., was the murderer of his nephew and sovereign. The Duke of York, afterwards James II., was a malignant wretch whose greatest pleasure consisted in witnessing the infliction of torture, while his cowardice was shown in the nimble dexterity with which he beat a retreat at the first approach of danger. The peerage included the bigoted and persecuting Laud and the infamous Jeffreys. It is associated with the memory of the notorious John Churchill, first Duke of Marlborough, who, as a commander, starved his soldiers, embezzled their pay, and to crown his perfidy, sent secret intelligence to the French (with whom England was then at war) of an intended British expedition against their coast, the treacherous intelligence of which communicated by him caused the defeat of the expedition and the slaughter of 800 British sailors. British aristocratic blood is largely contaminated with very low-bred plebeian alliances of an illicit character, being associated with titles bestowed on Charles II.'s mistresses (on one particularly "for her many personal virtues!") with titles bestowed on their progeny by that "merry monarch," with enormous pensions and perquisites, and with the ducal coronets and the privilege of irresponsible legislation enjoyed by their living descendants.

The *feudalised* English *Sudra*, who grows half-crazy with delight at being addressed by a Lord, thanks Heaven for the House of Lords as "a check on hasty legislation." So far as I can see, however, it is only on good legislation that they act as a powerful check. When, in order to cheapen books and newspapers and thereby aid in popularising useful

knowledge, it was proposed to abolish the paper duty, the House of Lords threw out the Bill. When it was proposed to allow the Jews to sit in Parliament, or to give Dissenters the right of admission to the Universities, or to emancipate the Roman Catholics from political disabilities, the House of Lords repeatedly rejected the measures. They have made themselves odious by rejecting the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill and the Irish Compensation Bill. They also threw out Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill. At the date of the original Reform Bill (1832) they drove the people frantic and brought the country to the verge of revolution by their opposition to that measure. They have uniformly and steadfastly set themselves against municipal and social reform and religious liberty.

An edifying glimpse of the views of the Lords on sexual morality may be got by following the debate in the Upper House when the Criminal Law Amendment Bill was before them. The Tory Members, who always form, as might be expected, an overwhelming majority of the Chamber, never fail to assume high Christian virtue, combined, as a rule, however, with an utter indifference to the honour and purity of women not of their order. Their own wives and daughters must be guarded from evil as delicate fragile exotics, kept for the adornment of noble parterres and for the enjoyment and dignity of noble houses. The class of women from whom "unfortunates" are drawn are in "noble" eyes "a social necessity" by no means to be regretted. These female pariahs are to be kept "in good form" by police regulations and Contagious Diseases Acts. They are prohibited, under penalty, from importuning their well-bred customers, but the latter are left perfectly free to solicit them when they please with impunity. The idle young nobleman who plucks some pure flower from the producing classes and casts it, presently, cruelly soiled by himself, into the street,

must not be blamed for this heartless amusement. The nobleman who seduces is "received" everywhere if he be "eligible," and can always have reserved for him some fair patrician maiden when he is weary of his low-born loves. The woman who is seduced, though scarcely out of childhood, is thrust, by the characteristic legislation of the Lords, down into a gulf of shame and dishonour, out of which no repentance and no purity of life can ever avail to rescue her.

Such is an epitome of the sentiments of the Lords on the Social Evil question as revealed by their discussion of the Bill above referred to. The second clause of the Bill as it went up from the Commons made it a misdemeanor, punishable with two years' imprisonment, to procure or endeavour to procure any woman to become a common prostitute. But an earl, with that lofty sense of morality which distinguishes many of his class, moved that the offence should be confined to so inducing "any woman under 21 years of age." A marquis supported the proposal, and it was carried by 60 to 28. Another noble lord unsuccessfully tried to destroy Clause 5, which protected from ruin girls under 16, a brother peer objecting to the clause as too drastic. It was sought to reduce the age of consent to indecent assault from 16 to 14. Could noblemen be more solicitous for the protection of young girls? One hereditary legislator spoke as if all the blame of young girls being ruined was due to temptations wantonly coming from themselves to men. Two barons and a duke objected, in their zeal to promote Christian morality, to the attempt made in the Bill to put down houses of ill-fame.

When we come to bad measures, such as penal laws in Ireland, or the six Acts of George III.—measures for robbing the masses of their just rights—for degrading them and keeping them in ignorance—there we look in vain for any effective opposition from the House of Lords. In the

reign of Henry VIII. it was the members of the so-called nobility that helped the King to murder his wives, taking care, at the same time, to enrich themselves with the spoil of the abbeys and the monasteries as the price of their connivance. In the reign of Mary they stuck to their ill-gotten possessions, and threatened rebellion rather than part with one rood of their abbey lands. But, so long as they were left in undisturbed possession of their plunder, they gave the Queen full licence to glut her bloodthirstiness by burning poor peasants and tradesmen who objected to the Roman Catholic faith. Whatever the faults of Elizabeth, she was inseparably identified with national honour and prosperity. The so-called nobility hated and feared her, and she hated without fearing them. She chose her most trusted counsellors outside their ranks. In her reign the ducal order became extinct, and she made very few additions to the peerage. In the reign of James I. the ducal order was restored in the personage of the infamous Buckingham, and seats in the House of Lords were bought and sold as church livings are still—only for higher pecuniary considerations.

There has long seemed to me a close resemblance between the House of Lords and the Irish Land League, the difference being in favour of the latter. The common feature in each case is unwillingness to pay rent, or, at least, rent on any considerable scale. But while the Irish tenants are willing to pay a reasonable rent, the English aristocratic Crown tenants have gradually induced their Sovereign to release them from the payment of rent altogether, and constitute themselves owners. In pleasing contrast to the great English aristocratic landowners who, by successive encroachments have contrived to evade all rent, and so convert their tenancies into freeholds, the Irish Land Leaguers have always declared themselves willing to

pay a fair rent. All they have ever objected to is the landlord's power of raising rent to what they not unreasonably deem an exorbitant figure. Under the old clan system in Ireland, cultivators were always regarded as part owners of the soil; and all improvements being made by the tenant, the traditional idea of his part ownership with the landlord had never been surrendered. Consequently, Irish tenants, in resisting the arbitrary increase of rents, have done no more in their own conscientious opinion than defend their property. On the other hand, the land never was by law or custom regarded as the property of the great titled English landlords in rightful ownership. Yet these landlords have failed to submit to the condition of holding it subject to the payment of a fixed and moderate rent, a condition which would have more than contented Irish tenants in occupying their holdings. On the contrary, the English landlords have, step by step, schemed successfully to repudiate the entire rent charge with other original obligations.

The coarse nature of lordly tastes appears in the fact that, in very many cases, they must either be engaged in killing some innocent animal—in what they barbarously call "sport"—or running horses at their highest possible speed on the race-course, often with the demoralising adjunct of betting. It is hardly to be wondered at that nations of less brutal propensities have a rooted belief that when the Lords of England salute their friends and neighbours in pleasant weather they are accustomed to say, "It's a fine day; let us go and kill something." One of their favourite sports is, or recently was, shooting a species of the feathered tribe under revolting conditions. It was not creditable to the sentiments of the Prince of Wales that, as in regard to gambling, card parties, and horseracing, he formerly joined his mis-called "noble" friends in slaughtering holocausts of pigeons in inhuman



fashion, until public attention was roused against his conduct. The birds were released by degrees from a net and fired at by the cowardly sportsmen, without having any chance of escaping unhurt. They were prepared for their horrible fate by pins being stuck into them, by each one having an eye gouged out, and by having often half the feathers of one wing torn off them, by the twisting of their beaks, with other mutilations and ingenuities of torture too numerous to mention.

A Bill was introduced to prohibit pigeon-shooting, which had become an unmitigated scandal. The opposition to the Bill was led by the late Lord R——, an eminently pious churchman, whose zeal for the formal recognition of a Supreme Being led him to desire the imposition of a Theistic test on members joining the Upper House ; but we have been accustomed to hear of devout people in Western lands combining great devotion to the "triune God" with indifference to cruelty and barbarity. The useless sort of skill cultivated by pigeon shooting could just be as efficiently developed by throwing into the air glass balls or artificial birds, and shooting them. But sport so harmless would be too tame for British hereditary legislators. Not being cruel it would not be attractive. It would not be demoralising, and therefore it would be worthless. Hundreds of these innocent birds escaping to some inaccessible spot lie fluttering and palpitating in agony for hours, until death ends their sufferings. With the true English passion for inconsistency, the British Parliament protects cats and dogs from ill-usage, while seventy-eight peers voted against the measure for abolishing deliberate cruelty to pigeons. Lord F——, who formerly was prominent at the great religious May meetings in Exeter Hall, advocating the spread of education, and of the Christian Gospel among the "heathens," joined with the hard-hearted opponents of the anti-pigeon-torturing Bill.



Only six Bishops mustered on the occasion in defence of the poor victims of lawless atrocity, seven of these right reverend prelates being absent.

Another revolting sport still dear to British aristocrats and their grovelling, backboneless imitators is staghunting with her Majesty's buckhounds. The effect of it in deadening those delicate sensibilities, which ought to be jealously guarded and fostered in every true lady and gentleman, must be incalculably powerful. What sort of feelings must the royal family have when they do not spontaneously announce that no such disgusting recreation shall ever again be sanctioned by their authority or patronage?

Such are the Lords, with a few honourable exceptions, gloried in by Englishmen as "the second estate of the realm," and, next to royalty, the strongest pillar of English "Society." If we consider the dubious origin of most of the families who rank in the British nobility, and at the same time believe in the Darwinian theory of heredity, we shall not be surprised at the tendency to revert to the original type which, ever and anon, appears to be reproduced in the descendants. Lord Beaconsfield once said coarsely but accurately, before he humiliated himself to the level of becoming a "noble" catspaw to the aristocracy: "We owe the English peerage to three sources—the spoliation of the Church, the open and flagrant sale of its honours by the elder Stuarts, and the borough-mongering of our own times. These are the three main sources of the peerage of England, and, in my opinion, disgraceful ones." The people who believe in "blue blood" and in the sacredness of long pedigrees may well feel ashamed as they read the annals of the peerage and see how nearly every noble family created up to 150 years ago, either originated in vice or has thriven upon crime. If the blue-blooded members of the House of Lords were sensible men many of them would tear up their

pedigrees, and invite the Commons to join them in passing an Act rendering penal the publication or preservation of any such indexes to their family histories as Burke, Lodge, and Debrett produce. The language of Thackeray ("Book of Snobs") most fittingly expresses our contempt for a social institution which has so mischievously enervated and demoralised the community so fatally spell-bound by it. But, concurrently with the advent of democracy—much as I may recoil from the excesses into which this new political factor may ultimately fall when it has fully grasped the reins of power in England—the axe is laid at the root of aristocracy, and the mandate must sooner or later be issued by the former: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

The manufacturing and trading classes are, *potentially*, what the "upper ten thousand" are *actually*, making due allowance for exceptions. They have the snob *bacillus* in them, and material success, through dishonesty or honesty, is sure to develop it. It seems to matter little whether the middle classes belong to "Little Bethel" or the State Church; whether they have been brought up, metaphorically, on *brimstone* or *treadle*, in theological and ecclesiastical experiences; in the case of most of them, when they have amassed wealth, everything must yield to display. If they remain loyal to their lowly spiritual dwelling-place—the Evangelical Nonconformist chapel—as the wealthy Wood-street hosier, Samuel Morley, did, they are not satisfied without extremely deferential recognition of their financial superiority by both the shepherds and the flocks of the sect to which they belong.

If such commercial Crœsuses send their sons to Oxford or Cambridge, where parental wealth enables them to associate freely with the sons of their social superiors, it is almost infallibly certain that they will sooner or later turn

the heads of their carriage horses to the Church of which the Queen is the temporal head, unless they cease to believe in creeds and churches altogether. Even then, in too many cases, their position in "Society" demands that they should show outward respect to the faith professed by the Head of the State. Who ever heard of a peer by any chance being an Evangelical Dissenter? So, it is not considered quite respectable for a man who can erect a great mansion and give dinner parties to persons of title to be seen darkening the door of a non-episcopal chapel. This is an irrefutable proof that, with all the boasted power of "grace," nature is infinitely stronger. Indeed, some candidates for social position who rise from obscure birth-places, in back streets, do not feel that they have effectually purged themselves of the associations of their "low origin"—a fearful breach of English social requirements—till they have joined a Conservative Club as well as the Church of England. Thus the inordinate eagerness of rising as well as of risen Englishmen for wealth as a means of social display, and of being thought, financially, as important as persons they had always been accustomed to look upon as above them, eats the core of sincerity and simplicity out of them, and breeds in the bulk of the middle as well as the upper classes an incalculable amount of hollow pretence, the children exhibiting the faults of their parents in exaggerated outline.

During my long stay in England I have seen the rise, and too frequently the fall, of persons of the description just given, notably some who have made their money in trade. When they were workmen they made a virtue of necessity, regarded their employers as their natural enemies, and played the rôle of uncompromising Radicals. As they gained a footing as masters, it was wonderful to see their change of front. How naturally they fell into the economic slang, proper to

the employer class, denouncing the class from which but yesterday they had sprung. It is this change in religious-denomination, in politics, and in economics, which the half-educated Englishman adopts with the increasing weight of his purse, that accounts for the abiding strength of the Conservative element in Great Britain and her Parliament. It is different in very poor countries that have what is vaguely known as "Parliamentary Governments." It being more rare under the latter conditions for individuals and families to rise by the acquisition of wealth than in a great manufacturing and trading country like England; the wage-earners in poor countries develop into terribly-earnest Socialists and Anarchists. In England the continual recruiting of the capitalist ranks from workpeople operates as a check to wild economic propagandism, as the capitalist's view of "respectability" in the majority of instances impels him towards Conservatism. The socialism and anarchism of England are mostly of the academic type. In strike contests the men are now usually beaten for the simple reason that combinations of employers command a longer purse than combinations of workmen.

When a tradesman or manufacturer of the kind alluded to above makes a big lucky "hit" in business, he proceeds in breathless haste to summon to his aid the purveyors of coarse gentility. Having had no previous training in the laws of harmonious proportion as regards colours or dimensions, he gives a picture dealer a *carte blanche* up to a certain amount, and buys his pictures almost by the yard; the services of a maker of chairs, tables, ottomans, and window hangings are hired on similar principles; a literary man receives a fee to prepare a list of the books most adapted to give the impression that this slave of appearances is a person of superior intelligence. But from year to year the volumes remain unopened, and the sumptuous.

furniture is only kept to strike visitors with the substantial balance supposed to be at the host's bankers. I once knew a man of this sort, lifted by sudden wealth out of the uncouth sphere in which he was brought up, and he thought he must invite his clergyman and some other educated guests to a great dinner at his house. A conversation arose about the famous Diet of Worms, which figures prominently in the life of Luther, the great German Protestant Reformer. The wealthy host's knowledge did not extend so far; yet he had not the good sense to conceal his ignorance. "I think," said he, "you are all mistaken. The diet of ordinary worms is *earth*, and of silkworms *mulberry leaves*!" Had the words come from a man of culture they might have passed muster as conveying a good joke, but the author of them was perfectly innocent of anything higher than meaning prosaically what he said.

Referring to dinner parties in England, whether in aristocratic or middle-class circles, the ceremonialism which fashion exacts freezes up the *sang froid* and *bonhomie* which should be the supreme charm of a social feast. Macaulay, the great English historian, said: You invite a man to breakfast because you like him; you invite him to dinner because you know his father, or because he is introduced to you by an ancient friend. The free-and-easy morning coat best comports with the friendly morning repast, but in the redoubtable black swallow-tail and white necktie in which the best gentleman in England might easily be mistaken for a hotel waiter, one feels oneself in bonds. Certainly, in taking a last fond look at oneself in the glass before proceeding to a set dinner party, one has an unpleasant consciousness of the temporary imprisonment of one's soul which is impending, and the sight of one's wife or daughter in low-necked dress and its fitting accessories, when her toilet is completed for the occasion, but deepens the dismal



feeling that one is, as it were, walking out to social burial. It is only when the master of the feast, in the Byronic spirit, commands his guests to "fill high the bowl with Samian wine," that the frost of ceremony begins to thaw, and the hospitable board becomes, if not "a feast of reason," at least a "flow of soul." The charming old friendly breakfast gatherings in England, which were so common in the days of Rogers, the banker and poet, Horner, Sydney Smith, the first Longman, and the second John Murray, and which were quite a delicious institution at all the British universities, at the houses of the professors, have been strangely cast in the shade, since the rapid increase of wealth in England by the introduction of free trade in 1846, when the vulgar rich set the pernicious fashion of giving show dinner parties.

If the families of the merchant and the tradesman are ever to return to simplicity and economy, the members of old and titled families must lead the way and live in smaller compass, give up the silly powdered and variegated frippery of their grooms, and be plainer in their *cuisine*. Let young "sprigs" of the aristocracy—I might add of royalty—instead of spending so much of their valuable time in theatrical amusement,\* the race, the hunt, and deer-stalking, turn more attention to the intellectual furniture in which so many of them are deficient, and to philanthropic work, to which comparatively so few devote themselves. Let the bulk of young English ladies who yawn away the best part of their time over fifth-rate novels, or riding and driving in Rotten Row, or frequenting an intermittent round of "At Homes" and other party festivities, help to ameliorate the condition of the multitudes of poor wretches of their own

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\* Actors in China are all regarded as belonging to one of the lowest social grades.



sex who are perishing, soul and body, for want of instruction and a competent livelihood ; and I venture to believe that they would know—as they have no opportunity of doing now—what it is to be "twice-blessed." Stuffing and pampering, so offensive to a plain foreigner like myself, but promotes excessive animal development. Hence the proverbial ill-control of the appetites in England by lounging Epicurean army and navy men, and idle members of the nobility, gentry and rich representatives of the middle class of both sexes, and the shocking social and domestic scandals which constantly startle the world in consequence. Plutarch distinctly traces the proverbial stupidity of his countrymen, the Bœotians, to an excessive use of animal food, and I have no doubt that many of the moral as well as the intellectual defects of Englishmen are due to the same cause.

Since coming to this country I have often followed the fashionable crowd, in dog-days, to the seaside for a month. I must frankly say that my health was in no need of such a change, and I was not in the least conscious of being impelled by an ambition to follow in the wake of Aldermanic devotees of turtle-soup and pretentious M.P.'s. I wonder how many of those servile worshippers of fashion who frequent "select" watering places would be candid enough to make a similar confession of the truth. My sole purpose was to pursue that ever-fascinating study, the ways of English "Society," under the particular phase it presents at the coast in the holiday season. And I made an amusing discovery in my interviews with *paterfamilias* whom I met lolling on the seats out of doors and in the coffee-room of the hotel. Many of these genteel, but hard-worked "bread-winners" gave me to understand that, had they consulted the dictates of prudence in the then depressed state of British finance, they would decidedly

have stayed at home. As I was not supposed to be in the secrets of English social propriety, they became confidential, and I encouraged their trustful disposition by dilating on the foibles of Chinamen.

I may just say in passing that they thought they were conferring a high compliment on me by remarking that, had I not divulged my nationality, I might easily have passed for a Frenchman, or a citizen of some other Latin nation, as I had given up the queue imposed upon the people of the "Celestial Empire" by the conquerors of my country of the Tartar dynasty, and had assumed the usual British gentleman's morning and evening dress, as occasion required. But if the insular notions of John Bull would allow his mind to take in a proper estimate of the extent of China, and the fact that it is inhabited by one-third of all the human beings on the globe, he would not betray such gross obtuseness as he too often exhibits about the country and its people.

Well, some of these communicative friends gave me to understand privately that the annual stampede to the coast was, in many cases, the result of a fashionable contagion, which smote whole classes of the community, so that it was considered insufferably discreditable for anybody admitted into "good society" (which does not mean pious and benevolent people, but simply those who have earned a reputation for giving and receiving expensive and brilliant dinner and dancing\* parties) to be obliged to confess, when the round of winter invitations returned, that they had not shut up their house and made a stay at the seaside, or travelled in a foreign country for a month or two in summer or autumn. These apparently unwilling slaves of fashion assured me that the very credit of a family with local trades-

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\* Dancing is unknown among the Chinese.

people, and of a merchant with his creditors, largely depended on this annual transfer of themselves and their households to the coast. One gentleman was particularly unreserved on the subject. He said: "I come with my family, after a year of tremendous losses which have shattered my position. But what does one's wife and family care for agonising incidents of that sort? Unless they could take part in dinner conversations in the London 'season,' and make copious references to the fact that they had lived a month or two out of the metropolis in hot weather, they well know they would be tabooed. This is an appalling social prospect, and the husband and father, be he gainer or loser during the year, must suffer martyrdom in the paying of coast bills which he really cannot, for the time being, afford, or *ruin his credit by economy*, and submit to the exclusion of his wife and daughters from their earthly elysium—fashionable life."

Another worthy gentleman, a shade lower, if anything, in the social scale, was equally frank. He became, I thought, rather too familiar, for he actually began his brief addresses every now and then with the fond expression, "My dear Chang," the greatest liberty ever taken with me during the years I have lived in England. But I also find that as one rises in the grade of culture in Britain people become proportionately respectful to those they meet. Those who have more money than breeding are apt to have the idea that, if only they possess more wealth than the multitude they mix with, they must cultivate vulgar and insolent bounce towards persons less wealthy than themselves as a sort of duty belonging to their station. This worthy seaside acquaintance said, "Even those best off among us in this country are slaves. The only difference between our thralldom and that of black men captured for bondage by Portuguese slave-traders is that we are bound with silken

cords instead of iron shackles. If one is to live, and not merely *exist*, in this ostentatious country, the real happiness of which has been destroyed by past material prosperity, a considerable expenditure and an elaborate conformity are necessary. You must follow in the footsteps of neighbours who move in your own sphere, or in one a little higher, and, whether it be to your taste or not, you must talk about picture galleries, plays, costly and fashionable books, visits to distant places ; and the farther you go from home—apart from the object you have in view—the more you are lionised in circles of ambitious *quidnuncs* on your return. A yacht voyage to the Black Sea or Spitzbergen sounds very charming in London drawing-rooms. As for Lord Brassey, who has circumnavigated the world—I believe more than once—in his own yacht, the ‘Sunbeam,’ it is said that on his return he established a demand for his society in prominent circles by the plucky character of his feats far beyond his ability to supply if he should live to the age of the fabled Methuselah. The only possible method by which a man of moderate means can prevent social asphyxiation in England, as M. Taine says, is to “insure your life for a sum, the premium on which will consume the bulk of your annual savings, and then live up to the last available sixpence of your income.”

These confessions of ingenuous men made me feel a little sad, and gave me a peep behind the veil which hides the Promethean vulture that incessantly preys upon the liver of the British middle class, for which I was hardly prepared. The perils to health and life involved in the usual summer migration are great. A charge of £10 a week for a few rooms, apart from board, is not the worst part of the infliction complained of. The drainage may be ruinously bad, though it is never found out till the utter prostration of a wife or child by typhoid-fever makes it apparent. The

vexatious inconvenience often encountered from crusty landladies, indigestible meals, and an overcrowded establishment, must be patiently borne; not generally because the exigencies of health require this precarious and costly periodic sojourn at the coast, except where moneygrubs half kill themselves with business anxieties, or fashion-hunters over-eat themselves, waste their energies in midnight revels, or are in danger of apoplexy from wealthy indolence and inanity. In many cases the familiar comforts of home have to be exchanged for the semi-picnic experiences of the seaside, because the imperious rule of Mrs. Grundy exacts the sacrifice, and she must be implicitly obeyed.

Some facts of startling interest respecting English ladies I learned for the first time at the English coast. The free-and-easy manners between the sexes, fast gaining ground in British society, seem to be driving out the courtesy and deference paid to the softer sex by men of a former generation. I ought to premise that the unaffected modesty and abstemiousness of women in China corresponding to those in the middle and upper classes here, remain in no way deteriorated as compared with what they were thousands of years ago. My countrywomen never drink wine except at a feast, and then most sparingly. Female innocence, we Chinamen find, is a very delicate plant that wants constant and special efforts for its protection, and these seem to me too much neglected in England. In my country, as regards this matter, so vital to pure domestic and social life, we "take the bull by the horns." Husband, wife, and adult children in China may eat together at the same table, if no male strangers or guests are present. When the latter sit at a meal, however, it would be deemed indecent for females to appear in the party. On festive occasions when friends are invited to dinner, the men and the women sit by themselves



apart. Ladies and gentlemen, if not previously acquainted, are not formally introduced to each other when invited to a feast at the same house; nor do they converse and promenade together. The ladies keep by themselves in the inner apartments, while the gentlemen remain in the reception-room, public hall, or library. The sexes—even those who are acquainted or related—are not allowed to mingle together on any public occasion. To set an example of modest reserve, husband and wife never walk side by side or arm in arm in the streets. Possibly this may be deemed an excess of caution. Admitting for the sake of argument that it is, it may be safely asserted that this extreme is much less dangerous to public morals than the extreme prevailing in England, of assigning to women employments as well as political and civil rights hitherto limited to man.

A large section of so-called British political and social reformers are engaged in the dubious business of transforming women into men and men into angels. The general effect of setting women to perform functions formerly considered suitable only for men must, sooner or latter, efface that delicacy of bearing which we have been accustomed to regard as the crown of female character. We may ignore the existence of sexual differences, but they will always assert themselves when the necessary conditions are present. The result, indeed, appears in stealthy drinking, and, more recently, in smoking habits, which, I am assured, are fearfully on the increase among wives and, occasionally, daughters in the middle and upper classes of English society. I was told that leading wine and spirit merchants in the metropolis and in the provinces are doing a brisk and growing business in supplying a certain extensive circle of ladies of weak pulsation with wine, brandy, whiskey, and gin at their homes without the knowledge of husbands and fathers. When I



reported this fact to my friends and relatives in China they were astounded beyond measure. This branch of trade has already necessitated the construction of a large number of spring carts, which chiefly contain a quantity of spirit decanters. These, by arrangement, are filled and regularly exchanged for empty ones in the husband's absence, and thus the poor breadwinner is kept in ignorance of the traffic which is gradually inflaming the body and soul of his feeble-pulsed wife. An accumulation of empty spirit bottles in the pantry would excite his suspicion, but this is effectually prevented by the eternal decanter, which shows an unvarying measurement of alcoholic drink, and is calculated to convey an impression of his wife's moderation. It is said that in the early days of Australia, excessive drinking among "respectable" females used to be so general that a bottle of rum or whiskey would admit the possessor into some well-to-do circles; and it is to be feared that, if this custom is not restrained in the parent country, England may soon attain a similar notoriety.

Proof was also afforded me, at the coast, that there are large drapery establishments in the West End of London in which there are departments devoted exclusively to refreshments, the liquor consumed by lady customers being included in the invoice rendered under the name of calico or lace. Heaven forbid that in these melancholy statements I should include English ladies indiscriminately, or even the majority of them. But it can no longer be doubted that the demoralising practice complained of is at least of such extent among the existing "Mothers of England," that the generation springing from them cannot fail to deteriorate seriously in consequence. Such insidious faults cannot be checked by smooth-tongued preachers, chiefly dependent for support on their congregations, who wrap up their rebukes of wrong-doing in vague theological generalities,

and domestic purity is blighted by the premature interment of not a few English wives in drunkards' graves. Could Shakspeare, in his wide-reaching penetration of character, have had this painful vice *laterally* in his mind with the one at which the exclamation was directly aimed, which he put into the mouth of one of his *dramatis personæ* "O frailty, thy name is woman"? Or, as it was translated in pardonable error by a well-meaning Frenchman, into his vernacular: *Mademoiselle Frailty, est le nom de la femme!* Finally, a calm and impartial consideration of the social structure in England confirms the opinion of Matthew Arnold: it "materialises the upper classes, vulgarises the middle classes, and brutalises the lower classes." It is unnecessary to add that the last-mentioned classes are as entirely outside British society as pariahs are outside the Brahminical castes of India.

In contrast to the elaborately dressed and scented mob designated "Society" in England, let us glance at the calm, refined, rational, and intelligent life of a Chinese gentleman. The home—which is at the antipodes of that parade of English vanity called the "at home"—is supreme in China, the family, and not the *individual*, being there the social unit. The gilded youth of Anglo-Saxon cities who live in clubs, visit painted harlots, and have no fireside of their own have no counterpart in China. "Mashers," "dudes," and lackadaisical loungers generally, would be ostracised in the Far East as social monstrosities. Every Chinese gentleman has a home and domestic ties upon which he bestows all the time, thought, and money he can afford. Particularly noticeable in his mode of living are the virtues of simplicity, economy, and serenity. From £2000 to £4000 sterling is an ample fortune in China to enable a Chinaman who possesses the intellectual and æsthetic requisites to maintain, in style of living, the position of a gentleman.

In the cultured quarter of a Chinese city, a house suited to his position and tastes can be bought for £400 to £500, and, in a respectable district or suburb, for £300 to £400. The enormous real estate values in British and American cities are happily unknown in my dear country, where the oppressive yoke of ground-landlordism is never even dreamt of. As is shown at length in another chapter, those who use land for any purpose in China are leaseholders from the State, and rents are all so low as never to be found burdensome. This land system, in fact, combines the single tax so sensibly advocated by Henry George and the communal ownership of the Russian mir or village. Thus all speculation in land, such as has lately brought ruin upon several Australian colonies, and is often causing tumultuous ebbs and flows in the fortunes of American citizens, is rendered impossible, while the hateful phrase "unearned increment" is not to be found in the Chinese vocabulary.

The modest dwelling of a Chinese gentleman has no external attractions. It is usually hidden from view behind a wall 14 feet high, with a single gate in the middle. This is so arranged with hinges and bars that it forms a very narrow wicket for servants, messengers, tradespeople and labourers, but opens to its full width for the head of the family, visitors, relatives, and officials. The house, which is marked by high roofs and pointed gables, never contains less than two halls, with a stone courtyard, around which are rectangularly arranged four rooms—two parlours, a sitting-room, and a study. Where there is land enough to spare there may be seen a front yard, garden, fish pond, outer court, and out-buildings. The rooms generally communicate with each other, as well as with the halls. The principal rooms are tastefully furnished in ebony, teak, or ebonised hard woods, at a cost of £100, including wall decorations, flowers, flower-pots, and stands.

The average family of a Chinese gentleman includes his father, mother, wife, two or three children, one house servant, one slave girl, one general servant, and the lady who is entrusted with general superintendence of the household and the disbursement of the family expenditure, and who sustains to the head confidential relations, which are openly acknowledged by all the other members of the family. The expenses of living, which can be indefinitely economised, according to the business ability of the confidential matron referred to, range, in a gentleman's home, from £9 to £29 a month. The item of food costs from 3s. to 8s. 4d. per day; servants, from 10s. to 25s. per month each; chair hire, from £2 to £4 per month; and tea, coffee, opium, tobacco, fruit, sweetmeats, and hospitality inclusive, from 4s. 4d. to £6 per month. The gentleman of high position in China, even the most economical, is put to considerably more expense for clothing than a person of corresponding rank in England. This arises from the fact that he must have a variously assorted wardrobe, adapted to all sorts of weather, and to numerous political and social functions. A gentleman practising economy cannot make less than an expenditure of £224 suffice for his numerous garments, and not a few of that position spend £630 in outfits. The annual wear and tear varies from £20 to £60 per annum. Not the least interesting article of gentlemanly apparel in China is the official boot, which is made of black or dark blue cloth, with a felt sole over an inch thick. It is so shaped as to increase the apparent size of the wearer's foot and ankle. There is also a shoe worn which is gorgeously embroidered. Coverings for the head are in endless variety and degrees of adornment. But in each cap and hat, the button, which shows the rank of the wearer, is a crystal ball, a coral globe, a turquoise or emerald sphere, or a blazing ruby of the size and shape of a pigeon's egg. Some

cost 4s.; others are worth scores of pounds; a few of the quality worn by the Premier of the Empire and the Viceroys of Kuang-tung and Fokien, represent £1000 a piece. The shapes of hats worn are not of Chinese character or origin. They are lineally descended from the Tartar tribes in bleak Manchuria, and, like the Chinaman's pigtail, are silent witnesses to-day of the Conquest of China by the serried hosts of Ghengis Khan and Kublai Khan, many centuries ago. Human nature all over the world seems to take kindly to perversions. "Puritan," a term coined in England in the sixteenth century, and "Methodist," in the eighteenth century, on a similar principle, from being expressive of reproach, have come to be openly venerated by the descendants of those who originally bore them.

"The New Year's Coat," a garment forming a special part of the Chinese gentleman's wardrobe, is worn by him only for an hour or more on the first day of each year, on paying obeisance to the Emperor, or visiting a high official for the first time, or on the Grand Birthday of a distinguished ancestor. On no account does it see the light again till another twelve months have elapsed. The robe is made of the richest, finest, and heaviest silk, embroidered all over with golden dragons and parti-coloured clouds, and traversed by white and silver lines.\* Mandarins and millionaires have been known to own wardrobes valued at £20,000 to £100,000.

Unless the *paterfamilias* happens to have a building or apartments apart from the dwelling which is sacred to the occupation and use of himself and his family, he gives no social entertainment within, or contiguous to, his own premises. In his home are cherished family reciprocities of affection, family traditions, homage to ancestors, and his recreation largely consists of the quiet reading of thoughtful and entertaining books.



Nearly all hospitality is dispensed in public houses, with which every Chinese city abounds. In these places are held dinners, suppers, opium parties, games of chance, Bacchanalian and Cytherean feasts. The host and the guest spend the evening together, often the night, and a good part of the next day. Under the same conditions the Chinese gentleman receives business friends and officials, transacting legal, political, and commercial affairs. Indeed, he does almost everything at the inn which, in Western countries, is done at home or at an office. Domestic life is spent in quiet, meditative, and moderate enjoyment. The mutual duties of home between parents, grandparents, and children, masters, mistresses, and servants, are not left, as they are in the chaotic family life of England, to be picked up at haphazard or positively neglected. These duties are carefully and minutely taught by parents and schoolmasters out of the maxims of I'si Chi and Confucius, and religiously learned by young people as essentials of existence. Politeness, filial obedience, family peace, and sobriety are held to be as imperative as the obligations of honesty and truth. This sweet and balanced repose of mind and body is never in danger of being ruthlessly disturbed, as in Western countries, by Stock Exchange "bulling and bearing," land booms, building manias, gold discoveries in Mashonaland, Australia, or California. The wife and the confidential lady domestic manager may play together at cards, dice, or dominoes in the absence of the husband, and the children may romp in their hereditarily grave fashion; but reverence for the husband's person and position as a father and the responsible head of the household prompts a return to propriety and decorum when he appears on the scene.



## CHAPTER IV.

## ENGLISH DOCTORS.

WITH the deepest commiseration for my British medical friends, I learn that the prevailing business depression, of which people in England are always talking, has extended to the invalid market.\* So dull a time for maladies was never known. "The trade in them," writes a well-informed correspondent, "which has made so many fortunes and baronetcies, is suffering like the rest, from over-production, and it really seems as if the whole of the present stocks would have to be worked off before the malady mills can be set a going again. Some upper-class and many middle class people cannot afford to keep yachts, or come to London, or drink so largely of old port; and at last it has come to this, that they cannot even afford to be ill. This is very hard; it is the last straw. The most unfeeling heart must melt at the idea of a man who is compelled from sheer want of cash to postpone a deadly malady, which might else have removed him to brighter spheres in a regular and respectable manner." So bitter an irony of fate, it is to be feared, has overtaken not a few Englishmen, their wives, and their middle-aged sisters, who formerly could indulge in the costly luxury of an ailment, and have a soft-mannered doctor to dance attendance on them. They are compelled to go on living without being ill, because they cannot afford to pay for a medical man to kill or cure them. There is not a physician in the West End of

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\* This was written in 1893.

London who is not made aware of the fact by an appalling falling off in visits and fees. It is credibly reported that the most eminent, perhaps, of all London practitioners has found a diminution in his professional income recently at the rate of £6000 a year, and the rest are victimised in proportion by the harpy of health, which is said to be making terrific inroads on the national constitution, and business in drugs is not so brisk in consequence.

In sober earnest, I venture to say that half the complaints people—especially those who are idle—suffer from are imaginary. Of course, nobody denies that persons of all ages are liable to illness, with occasionally a fatal termination ; but in the vast majority of instances a doctor is superfluous at first—when men and women take the trouble to study the peculiarities of their physical system and its special requirements—and is perfectly helpless in the end, so far as his physic is concerned. No less an authority than Sir William Jenner has boldly declared that “the science of medicine is a barbarous jargon—every dose of medicine is a blind experiment.” The astonished students at the College of France were addressed as follows by Majendie, on his assumption of the Chair of Medicine at that institution :—“Gentlemen, medicine is humbug. Who knows anything about it? I tell you frankly, I don’t. Nature does a good deal ; doctors do very little—when they don’t do harm. When I was head physician at the Hôtel Dieu I divided the patients into three sections. To one I gave the regulation dispensary medicine in the regulation way ; to another I gave bread, milk, and coloured water ; and to the third section I gave nothing at all. Well, gentlemen, every one in the third section got well—Nature invariably came to the rescue.” Making allowance for a possible tincture of hyperbole in these candid statements by two of the most distinguished among the initiated, it must be admitted that

the doctor is often unnecessary, too often mischievous, and occasionally fatal. The ingenious "doseist"—to use a term of Artemus Ward—has theories about what is the matter with you, but of what value sometimes are they? Referring to the doctor, a genial writer remarks :—"He physics according to his theory, and then physics to correct his theory. This, with a dignity becoming his vocation and to veil his perplexity from the patient, he describes as changing the treatment. Wrong again ! Try back ; alter diet ; then physic away at the new diet. Wrong again ! Patient gets worse. Perhaps it is change of air, not change of food he wants—bright idea ! send him out of town. Off he goes into the country ; forgets to take his physic ; feels better ; gets well ; the doctor looks bland, nods his head, and says, 'Told you ; change of air—that's what you wanted !'" What he really required was to be let alone, to leave off worrying Nature—at least in a good many cases, if Jenner and Majendie are to be trusted. They aim at diet and discipline—assisting Nature instead of trying to force her.

Some doctors are accustomed to say : "Come to me at once ; if you delay your disease may be past curing." No doubt in a case of obviously serious illness the advice is sound. But if the doctor is consulted on the occasion of every trifling ailment, a frame morbidly chronic becomes inevitable, and health will fly from us whether we have a medical man or are without him. If the habit of using opiates is acquired we cannot sleep without them ; if we persist in tonics we shall eventually fancy we cannot eat without them ; if stimulants are gradually allowed sway, dependence on them for artificial working power, according to law, both sociological and medical, will grow with what it feeds upon. If we accept medical advice to take to our couch when we have a slight cold, sensitiveness to atmo-

spheric changes must proportionately increase. If, when we experience temporary bilious derangement, we resort to medical prescription, instead of exercise and a careful dietary, nature will strike work and say: "If you prefer violent and reactionary methods to my sure, but slower, modes of recuperation, you must bear the penal consequences." Hence, we may go too soon to the doctor and stay long enough to become martyrs to therapeutics. In acute cases like bronchitis, peritonitis, pulmonary, cerebral-viseral, and other functional diseases, for example, in which accurate diagnosis is paramount, it is foolish to postpone efficient medical aid. But if we are resolved to remain ignorant of our corporeal system and the regimen suitable to keep it in health, we must expect to be haunted by superstitious fears to allay which may prove a costly business. "The doctor," said Sir B. W. Richardson, "comes in to supplement our imperfect acquaintance with our frames and how to manage them."

In China the rule in regard to doctors is unmistakeably simple, "No cure, no pay." The only seeming departure from this arrangement, at once so equitable and so reasonable, is in the case of the Court physicians at Peking, who receive salaries in common with other officials in attendance upon the Emperor. But, after all, the distinction between the Imperial doctors and their brethren in less conspicuous walks of life is more apparent than real. When his Imperial Majesty falls ill, the income of his medical advisers is suspended until his recovery is assured, so that in both cases the profession is put on its mettle. If a carpenter "botches" his work he is expected to do it over again in an efficient manner, or forfeit the compensation allowed him by the custom of his trade. If a barber fails to perform his duties in removing hirsute excesses from one's head or face in a workmanlike fashion, he has no right.

to demand his reward. If a teacher professes to communicate instruction on a given subject and proves to be incapable of doing so, through ignorance of the particular branch of study in which he advertises himself as proficient, the law would protect the victim of his imposture against his exactions. Then, on what principle of economy or equity, has a doctor the right to claim a fee for attempting to cure an ailment, when his unsuccessful treatment plainly shows it to be beyond his comprehension and skill? By superstitious habit, of which science ought long ere this to have rid British subjects, medical services appear to be widely viewed in the light of a privilege, to be handsomely paid for, whether they are rendered with intelligence or only in a spirit of undiscerning empiricism.

It is sufficient that the doctor called in is enrolled in the list of duly certified practitioners. He may be utterly destitute of the medical *instinct* which *diagnoses* without the necessity of resorting perpetually to confusing precedents in analysis and prescription. He may be so remote from the mark in his administration of medicine that the patient grows worse under his care. The symptoms may assume so dangerous a form that another physician has to be summoned, and a totally different treatment adopted. Convalescence may be as distinctly due to the new *régime* as death was threatened by the experimental blundering of the old. The unskilful bungler is supported by senseless custom in demanding so much for each of his worse than fruitless visits. There is nothing to prevent him, if the patient or his friends do not interpose, from repeating and protracting these visits to an extent far beyond the requirements of the case, chiefly for the purpose of enlarging his bill. Indeed, I once met a country doctor who, when in his cups, frankly confessed that he derived the greater part of his income from a single wealthy patient—an old maiden



lady—who was infatuated enough to believe that he alone understood her case. His contemptible and heartless method was, if she seemed to be approaching too near good health, to prescribe some drug having the effect of somewhat retarding recovery ; and if she happened to be getting rather low, he would apply a tonic for her partial restoration.

If a certain section of doctors had the moral sensitiveness to form themselves into a distinct medical society, and inscribe on their banners the Chinese principle “No cure, no pay,” they would become the most popular members of their order. Their system of fees at present is a blot upon Western civilisation, as well as an affront to common sense. In how many instances do they crush the spirit of poor widows and orphans by perhaps first immolating the breadwinner of the family, through ignorance of his complaint, and then leaving the bereaved a heritage of debt from the enormity of their fees! At the moment when the destitute family needs sympathy and aid, the impotent but exacting *Æsculapius* who “lost the case” intensifies their anguish by oppressive charges for his abortive efforts to heal. Such want of consideration, if it were not so common and so superstitiously tolerated, would be universally reprobated. But no doubt doctors are often to be found who are so benevolently disposed, and at the same time so passionately devoted to the science of their profession, as to be above temptations to avarice. I have heard physicians complain of the apparent ingratitude shown by some patients in the style of address adopted towards them in the respective stages of acute suffering and progress towards recovery. While life trembles in the balance the doctor is called “My Dear Sir;” when the crisis is passed, the less fervent designation “Dear Sir” is heard; and when normal strength is regained, the medical man is styled more dis-

tantly still "Sir." Well, it would not be surprising if there were some truth at the bottom of this representation. When danger is felt to be most serious the sufferer is supremely concerned for the preservation of life, and he naturally uses the most tender persuasion to win the deepest interest of the doctor in his behalf. As the patient rallies, anticipating restoration to health, he begins to recount the numerous visits of the medical expert, and grows troubled at the thought of having to meet the heavy bill, the rendering of which is the only certain event connected with the issue of an illness to which the doctor is called in. No wonder the tone of the patient becomes altered as this prospective drain upon his perhaps slender resources stares him in the face. Indeed, the exercise of his gratitude is interrupted by the oppressive though undetailed character of the fees charged by the man he struggles in vain to regard as his disinterested benefactor. If the treatment prescribed has been effectual, the patient's first sentiment is that of thankfulness, mingled with respect, towards his medical adviser. But when the idea of the bill, so soon to follow, haunts him, the seeming beneficence of the doctor is quickly transformed to the patient's vision into something akin to trade avarice, all the more repulsive in proportion to the benign manner in which his inquiries about the invalid's health were at first conducted.

There is no sense of impropriety felt in seeing a merchant or manufacturer trying to make as much money as he can, provided his business is honestly managed. Nobody expects him to push his wares except so far as he sees his way to a substantial return of financial profit. But an inordinate love of money in one devoted to curing disease, which is sometimes to be met with, cannot but appear anomalous to all thinking persons, whether they allow themselves to express their feelings on the subject or

not. It is something like an outrage on humanity for any body of men to enrich themselves out of the misfortunes of mankind, of whatever nature these may be. The sight is repugnant of a person becoming a religious teacher mainly for the gratification of self-interest and the accumulation of money. But it is even less unnatural for one man to get paid so much for delivering a pulpit lecture than for another to demand a handful of gold for cauterising a wound, applying a stethoscope, scarifying an eye, feeling a pulse, examining a tongue, or writing the names of a drug or two in dog-latin.

There is a certain spontaneity of human sympathy associated, in every well-regulated mind, with the relief of suffering, which seems revoltingly incompatible with recording the services rendered in an invoice, and attaching a large sum to the end of a brief line referring to "medical attendance" for so many months. This becomes evident when we consider what would be thought of a man who, after rescuing an unfortunate child from drowning, or after staunching a bleeding wound, met with accidentally in the street, should send in a bill for the work done, to the parents. It is the "Humane Society" which undertakes to reward such acts of bravery and self-denial. So I would have doctors of every grade and variety certificated and paid by the State, in common with the sailors and soldiers, who fight battles abroad and defend our homes. There is another profession—that of lawyers—which also fattens on human trials of another kind that I would wish to include in the category of paid Government officials, for similar reasons.

The capacity of a certain class of English doctors and the unconscionable extent of their charges have been a prolific subject of comment for centuries. From the days of the Stuarts to those of the Georges, medical practice was neces-

sarily so unscientific as to be removed hardly a degree above barefaced quackery. Yet from the beginning of the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century, the deference paid to ignorant and pretentious physicians by all classes of society, and the extravagant monetary recompense given in many cases for their services, are very noticeable. This seems all the more extraordinary to the present generation when it is remembered that the phlebotomising system pursued up to fifty years ago is now not only discarded, but ridiculed as irrational and absurd. Never did any set of professional empirics lay themselves more fairly open to biting satire as the medical contemporaries of Molière did, by their quackeries, to the lash of his scornful ridicule in the comedies of "*L'Amour Médecin*," "*Le Médecin Malgré Lui*," "*Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*," and the "*Malade Imaginaire*."\*

Sir Astley Cooper's practice at the zenith of his fame was worth £15,000 to £21,000 a year to him. A certain Mincing-lane merchant used to pay him a fixed salary of £600 a year to visit him at his house near Croydon and attend to the claims of his health. Hyatt, a West India millionaire, when restored to health after having been visited by several doctors, gave each of the others a cheque for a sum running into hundreds of pounds. But he showed his special gratitude to Sir Astley in a very eccentric manner. Throwing his nightcap at the eminent physician from the bed where he lay, he said: "You take that." The great man only replied: "I suppose I must pocket the affront." In this head-dress of the wealthy invalid the lucky doctor found a cheque for a thousand guineas. Dr. Dimsdale, a Hertford physician, and subsequently parliamentary repre-

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\* See Dr. A. M. Brown's "*Molière and his Medical Associations*." Cotton Press.

sentative of that borough, was summoned to Russia to inoculate the Empress Catherine and her son. In return for the services rendered he received from her Majesty £1200, a pension of £500 for life, and the rank of baron of the empire. A modern Emperor of Austria once asked the eminent doctor, Quadrin, to accept £2000 a year as pension, and created him a baron for frankly telling him that he had not forty-eight hours to live. Dr. Atkins, on a critical occasion, was sent for by James I. It was when his son, afterwards Charles I., as an infant was dangerously ill of a fever. The King handed Atkins £6000 for his visit and advice, neither of which in those days probably was of the slightest value. It is stated that Sir Richard Jebb, who had the reputation of making the love of "filthy lucre" paramount, when visiting a patient was paid only three guineas, while his lowest charge in such a case was five guineas. It was a delicate subject to speak of; but he adopted a mode of enlightening the persons giving him the reduced fee which could leave no doubt as to his meaning. As soon as he received the money he dropped it, as if by accident, on the floor, and when those present had collected the gold pieces he said: "There must be two more." The hint was at once understood, and the deficient amount made up by the patient and his family.

One of the cleverest "dodges" on record for advertising a man's medical practice is related of the celebrated Dr. Mead, who happened to be the son of a Dissenting minister in the heart of London. The wily physician not unfrequently arranged with his servant to call him out of the congregation while the sermon was in progress, and the reverend parent, who lent his countenance to the artifice, is said to have paused at the dramatic exit of his son, giving a very practical turn to the circumstance by asking the worshippers, in parenthesis, to spend a brief period there and



then in prayer for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the patient to whom his son was supposed to have been called.

I wish I could believe that the entire profession in England had grown less greedy of pelf and more completely absorbed in the slowly-developing science of medicine. But, unhappily, personal observation and experience go quite in the opposite direction. A gentleman known to me had four children and a nursemaid seriously ill at the same time of scarlatina. The head of the family had often been ostentatiously praised by the physician, as a friend distinguished by rare intelligence and enlightenment, whose society was to be coveted. At the same time he knew with certainty that this troubled father had domestic claims upon him somewhat in excess of his means. Yet when the inevitable bill for attendance arrived, there was not the least sign of abatement apparent in the fees charged.

My own case might also be cited as an example of medical cupidity. Through unremitting mental exertion, I was, some years since, suddenly struck down with fever in London, followed by a long interval of insensibility. My housekeeper called in my usual adviser, whom I had happened to consult on previous occasions, chiefly because his door-plate was not far off. This wiseacre pronounced the disease to be *typhoid*, and shaped his treatment accordingly. But the housekeeper thought it expedient, while I was still oblivious of what was passing around me, to telegraph for an expert from Harley-street whom I had met in society. The neighbouring doctor had formed his little theory of my ailment from the presence of a few little dark venous spots, which, however, had existed for many years, and had no more connection with my suffering than the ebb and flow of the tides have with periwinkles, as the cause. The West-end "light," with charac-

teristically jaunty airs of self-complacency, endorsed this preposterous *diagnosis*, and added, in learned confirmation of the view, without the faintest proof, that my brain had been breaking up for some time. Before leaving my bedside, as I was afterwards informed, the dapper and narrow-minded little specialist "collared" his guineas, and consoled my housekeeper with the thought that I should probably end my life about six hours later.

The "general practitioner" (a doctor chiefly in the sense of having passed a minimum of the required Scotch University medical examinations, of having walked a hospital, and of having consulted at random handbooks of "precedents") humbly bowed assent to the fussy *little* personage's judgment. But the strength of my constitution outwitted the empiric theories and falsified the *shallow* predictions of both these incarnations of vulgar professional conceit. Fortunately, too, my faithful nurse and some business friends who called were not satisfied with the *dicta* of these pretenders to medical knowledge. A third doctor was invited to look at me; but I ought not to omit to state that it was with the greatest difficulty the man chiefly in charge of the case could be induced to agree to the presence of the new comer. He was on such excellent terms with his own counsels that it became a serious question with him whether his *amour propre*, the dignity of his calling, and his personal success in the profession were not considerations of rather more importance than saving my life. The accident of a sudden family bereavement deprived me of his visits for a day, and an excuse was thus easily found by my anxious friends for obtaining the benefit of a third opinion. This proved to be my deliverance from the grave. The last attendant invited—a *born* doctor—the son of one doctor, and the grandson of another, scattered the theory of his two predecessors to the winds. He could find no symptoms of

*typhoid*, and pronounced for congestion of the brain. This, of course, was bad enough ; but what is more to the point, it turned out to be the correct view. My treatment was changed and my life saved, mainly owing to the notions of the first guides consulted being promptly set aside.

But do you suppose the stupidity of these two men, with the grave peril it involved to me, was allowed for in the bills sent in? By no means. Every visit was punctiliously charged for by my usual practitioner, although he was quite on the wrong tack, until doctor number three was called in, and although the former actually declared my case hopeless. Where is the sense; where is the justice; where is the common decency of this gross professional imposition? The pious practitioner first on the scene, who was a "burning and shining light" at an Evangelical Chapel, and a teacher of a "Young Men's Bible-class," never suffered his conscience to be ruffled for a moment by the moral anomaly of charging full fees for unintentionally hastening my death by erroneous treatment. Indeed, so far from having expressed regret for the wrong course he pursued and the absurd prediction of my immediate death which he confidentially made, his manner was as unabashed as if he was incapable of making a mistake. At the same time it was not difficult to see in his face occasional signs of uneasiness. But an analysis of these proved beyond a doubt that he dreaded my recovery solely because he suspected that I should throw doubt on his competency and spoil his practice. It was plain that it was more important, in his interest, that I should die, and thus verify his professional opinion, than that I should live as a walking contradiction of it. Ever after he bore me a grudge on the ground that I was obstinately bent on recovering my health, demonstrating him to be a false prophet. Most of the talk of the general practitioner and the Harley-street specialist, when

they were in my presence, was on the vulgar topic of the incomes they were making.

In fact, it was often repulsive to me to hear them speak about making money, as if it were the alpha and omega of their hopes, labours, and wishes. Once, when an expression of regret was dropped by me at the declining health of a certain gentleman in the suburb where I lived, the doctor, interposing with brutal frankness, said, "I have no reason to complain, for he is worth to me £40 a year." Another "fashionable" doctor, to whom I was introduced on one occasion, was said by his relations to have but two objects in life. The one was to be master of his own particular branch of medicine; the other was to make his medical skill tributary to the accumulation of as large a fortune as possible in the shortest possible space of time. Consequently, when a Bristol bank failed, in which this slave of professional avarice held a large number of shares, he took his loss so much to heart that he took leave of his senses, jumped from a top window in his house, and was spiked to death on the railings below. Yet it was ascertained that, even after making allowance in the diminution of his resources by the collapse of the bank, he would have had ample property left, and a practice worth several thousands a year! The lack of philosophic self-control shown in this lamentable instance betrays a degree of greed, cowardice, and meanness which excite unmitigated contempt, especially in a man engaged in an occupation which takes credit for its philanthropic character.

The practice of medicine in Europe seems to have risen from extremely humble beginnings. In the feudal ages the almost universal treatment (cure one cannot call it) for disease was bleeding. Most of the abbeys at that period had a "flebotomaria," or bleeding house, attached to it, in which the sacred inmates submitted to "minutions," as they

were called, or blood-lettings. Curiously enough, the operation was performed at stated periods of the day to strains of psalmody. The resident "brethren" underwent five "minutions" annually:—In September, before Advent, before Lent, after Easter, and at Pentecost.

In England the profession cannot boast of a very dignified origin. Lord Thurlow, in a speech he delivered in Parliament on July 17th, 1797, against the "Surgeons' Incorporation Bill," communicated an interesting piece of information on the subject. He stated that by a Statute, which I believe is still in force, barbers and surgeons are alike bound to exhibit a pole at an acute angle with the upper part of their door. The pole of the barber—the original blood-letter, and lineal predecessor of the English surgeon—by law, must be painted in white and blue stripes, these colours representing venous and arterial blood respectively. But the surgeon's pole was required to have appended to it a gallipot and a red rag. When medical practice evolved into a separate and "respectable" profession, the law as to polarisation was evaded by the substitution of the red lamp which in most cases still adorns the front of the doctor's house.

The English panacea for the disease known as *rickets* in children was to pull the body of the invalid child between the severed parts of a split tree stump; and until a century ago some men of distinguished scholarship reverently submitted to the touch of the sovereign in the belief that they could, by a specific "virtue" supposed to proceed from royal fingers, be cured of scrofula. A baked toad in a silk bag was long considered in England to be a remedy for pulmonary complaints, and a bay leaf worn in the button-hole to be a preservative against thunder. Mayerne, one of the most eminent physicians of his time, who died in 1655, recommended a monthly excess of wine and food as a potent



stimulant to any functions of the system that should happen to be in a morbid state. So precious was this accession to the *recipes* of the profession in England held to be, that the French work in which it was published found a translator in a man of no less distinction than Dr. Sherley, Court physician to Charles II. The same learned *repertoire* of cures recommended as singularly efficacious a certain gout powder, compounded of raspings of a human skull which had not been buried with pulverised human bones and sugar of lead. For sufferers from hypochondriasis a choice prescription by the same valued authority included "balsam of bats," stewed ants, and earth-worms, with hogs' grease, marrow of a stag and of the thigh bone of an ox. For some other ailments amulets and charms were freely administered. As recently as the times of Mead and Garth these eminent experts realised large sums from the sale of worthless nostrums. Dr. Thomas Saffold, the prince of quacks in Charles II.'s day, earned a sumptuous living by profusely showering printed leaflets, in prose and poetry, descriptive of his pretended curative achievements, at intervals all the way from Cheapside to Whitehall.

A class of doctors represented by "Pulsefeel" were permitted with impunity to ride through the country and palm off their poisonous and malodorous decoctions upon throngs of credulous dupes assembled at wakes and fairs. The plan usually adopted was to make a flaming speech on horseback and frighten the rustics into the belief that, although they might feel no present symptoms of failing health, they were really on the point of being attacked by some mortal illness, which only the nasty mixtures of the itinerant quack could avert. By way of preamble to his harangue, it was his custom to narrate his fictitious adventures in foreign countries, then known only by name to the great mass of the people. He began by allusion to his University career, his life till

manhood, however, being really spent as a boots in a hotel, or, perhaps, as a tallow chandler's assistant. He took ship for the West Indies, but was stranded on the shores of Morocco. The Sultan fell ill, and he was summoned to attend upon him. In the gardens around the palace he discovered medicinal herbs of extraordinary qualities for curing nervous affections. In a war waged by the Great Mogul he was taken prisoner and carried to Tartary over tempestuous seas and arid deserts, amidst fever and famine. In these terrible journeys he had met with minerals, the essence of which removed calculus and eczema in a few hours. An invasion of Tartary by the Grand Llama of Thibet again involved him in alarming perils, but innumerable vicissitudes wafted him over China and India, and home through the Red Indian territory of America, laden with medical treasures which he alone, of all European doctors, possessed. The incoherent geography of the charlatan was doubtless bewildering to those it was his business to deceive. But he nevertheless succeeded in persuading them that he reigned professionally without a rival, and it was with difficulty he could keep up with the brisk demand for his wares. After the spell exercised by the impudent and cruel delusions of the notorious Louthenberg upon the aristocracy in his day, let the English reserve for themselves some of the pity they (more particularly the female portion of them) lavish on the Chinese as victims of superstition.

## CHAPTER V.

## ENGLISH LAWYERS.

ALTHOUGH, unfortunately, not altogether inexperienced in law-suits, I am not learned enough in legal formalities to describe exhaustively the intricate manner in which English *law* has been contrived to favour in many cases the perversion of eternal *justice*.

It may be premised, however, that British judges in some instances are among the most candid of critics in denouncing the monstrous incongruities involved in the interpretations of law, the verdict of juries and the decisions of the bench. Lord Romilly is credited with saying: "Our law system was invented for the creation of costs and not for the due administration of justice." To Mr. Justice Lush is ascribed the remark, "If anyone sent him a tiger he would take it and pay for it rather than go to a lawyer." Lord Justice Bramwell is reported to have said that "suitors in England had better suffer almost any loss than go to law for redress;" and another excellent judge once asserted that "the greatest blot on our law system is the negligence, ignorance, or villiany of lawyers in making long bills of costs."

Under these circumstances it is not surprising that a former Emperor of Russia, on his first visit to England, when told that the latter country boasted 150,000 lawyers of different grades, should ask what useful function they served. The reply was that their *raison d'être* was chiefly "to keep the people in hot water." "What a nuisance," he exclaimed, "and robbery you must suffer. I govern nearly

100,000,000 of people with only two lawyers, and propose to hang one of them on my return to prevent the spread of the nuisance." The difficulty to be encountered at the very threshold in obtaining any substantial reform in the department of law in England is that Parliament, which is the fountain head of it, is afflicted with a plague of legal members whose business it is to resist all attempts to sweep away effete and unjust enactments, the relics of barbarous ages, and place cheap and easily procurable justice in the power of poor as well as rich.

England is not only priest-ridden ; it is lawyer-ridden. The priests pervert truth, the lawyers justice. The poorer classes escape the lawyer's oppression, comparatively because they are poor ; there is little to be made out of being a poor man's lawyer. Those in the middle and upper classes, and especially those engaged in commerce, meet the lawyer at every turn. They engage him to draw up contracts legally and safely, only to give work to more lawyers to attack or defend the contract whenever a dispute arises about it. There is more legal disputing to be made out of the most carefully drawn-up document than out of the interchange of the shortest notes.

Lawyers are paid not for the distinctness of the meaning, but according to the number of words they can employ in the instrument. Hence at the very outset the lawyer is paid to make every document as difficult to understand, and therefore as liable to misconstruction as he can. Then, when a fight arises about the meaning, the lawyer is not paid according to the rapidity with which he can settle it, but by the number and length of interviews, letters, applications to courts, consultations with counsel, &c. Hence the law-suit is dragged out as much as it possibly can be by the solicitor in the first place.

But the solicitor, although supposed to be a lawyer

qualified to guide his client, engages other lawyers called counsel to give opinions and state the case in court ; and these are not judges who will propound the law of the case: they are ferrets, who have to rake out all past judgments bearing on the case and in favour of those who fee them, the counsel on the other side being similarly engaged in raking up a set of judgments which favour their client. With these sets of opinions a great fight is made in court, the object of the speeches of the barristers employed on both sides being to mystify twelve men, who, having no knowledge of law themselves, are selected to settle the most serious disputes. It is true that a judge is always present to direct the twelve men, but if these latter take a notion that the judge is trying to influence them, they are apt to decide the other way. What, then, is the good of the judge? If he directs the jury, why should he not decide the case without them? He is supposed to be put in the high position of judge for his knowledge of law and capacity for judging ; why should he be made inferior to a lot of ignorant men with neither one nor the other qualification?

The barristers who make speeches on either side are the men who pocket the biggest fees and the highest prizes in the profession. From them are selected the judges. The barristers are hired by those who can pay for them ; the most able getting the highest fees, and, in their capacity for persuading ignorant jurymen that black is white, and white is black, for making truthful but nervous witnesses appear to be lying (the greatest accomplishment of all), and making lying evidence appear true, these great lights of their profession, who are being trained to be judges, are most highly paid when they manifest the greatest ability to pervert justice.

The greatest abuse of justice conceivable is the permitting these lawyers to bully and frighten witnesses, and nothing



seems to interfere with their licence in this direction. A poor, nervous lady is giving evidence of some plain act of theft. The able barrister asks her in a voice of wrath : "Now, woman, can you deny upon your oath that your grandmother did not suck eggs?" and the poor lady becomes for the time idiotic.

Sometimes the great barrister's speech on one side lasts for days, weeks, and even months. Every morsel of so-called evidence is rolled over the tongue three times, or even four. First in the opening speech, second in the examination of the witness, third in the reply, fourth in the judge's summing up. One-hundredth part of what is said would, in the great majority of cases, enable a qualified judge to give a most sound and just decision ; but then this would not pay the lawyers. Therefore, I say, they live by receiving bribes to pervert justice. If they were only reasonable in the amount of the bribes it would not be so bad ; but I observe that the costs on one side in a law-suit brought to recover £700 were £7000, and at the end they were no nearer a decision either way than at the beginning ! In no part of the world, I believe, is there one tithe of the difficulty and cost of procuring justice that is experienced in this England of so much boasted enlightenment. Many attempts have been made to codify the laws and reform legal procedures, but as these attempts are always made by lawyers, no real reform is ever effected. Nor will there ever be any improvement as long as it is the interest of solicitors to prolong cases, and barristers of the highest position can be hired with a larger fee to fight on behalf of wickedness, and to prevent justice being done.

I have been brought up to venerate truth, honour, and justice. England's greatest men despise them all when they are paid on the other side. I was once told a story by a lawyer of good position, and not more dishonest than

others. Yet he told it as a tribute to the credit of a great barrister he was recommending—a mighty name at the Bar, one who gets £100 a day for his services. A case was given him to defend in which the principal witness against his side was a respectable man called Johnson. The great lawyer saw that Johnson's evidence was simple and conclusive against his client. Having got his £100, he could not desert his man, however much he was in the wrong, so he bethought him of this little device. He leant over to one of the lawyers on his own side, and said, in a voice just loud enough to be heard by the opposing counsel, "I hope they will call Johnson." There was a flutter of excitement and whispering in the opposite camp, who imagined that the great man had found out something about Johnson, the bringing out of which would injure their case. The result was that Johnson shortly after left the court, and was not called by his side. The great man then improved the occasion. He showed that his opponent's case depended entirely on Johnson's evidence, yet they were afraid to call him. "Where is Johnson?" he thundered out; "why is he not here? Do you know, Gentlemen of the Jury, that Johnson not an hour ago was sitting in this chair!" The result of this clever trick was that the jury found their verdict in favour of the acute lawyer's side, and justice was wholly perverted.

Where were truth, justice and honour in this case? Put aside the consideration of one hundred pounds sterling, and thus lying, injustice, and dishonour triumph in their place. I could fill a volume with instances of the hindrance and perversion of justice by the system of law as carried on in England. I have heard a merchant who had considerable experience of law declare that with the best case in the world he would rather toss up a coin and cry "heads or tails" to settle the case than go into court.

On one occasion I myself persuaded two tradesmen to settle a serious dispute as to the meaning of a contract in this way. I tossed up the coin in their presence, "heads" was for C, "tails" for R. Heads won and the case was settled in a second. The disputants were reconciled. Had the case gone to the lawyers the amount in dispute would have been eaten up many times over by costs, and the disputants would have become enemies for life, without the slightest advantage to either of getting any better justice than the tossing up of a coin gave them. How easily could the system be completely reformed, and law and justice become synonymous, instead, as at present, antagonistic terms! I contend that they are now antagonistic. In the best case the heavy costs and frightful delays of law in England constitute gross injustice.

As the radical curse of the system is the hiring of lawyers by clients, so the cure is to be found in the doing away with hireling lawyers. Let it be made as dishonourable for a lawyer to take a fee as for a judge to take a bribe. Let everyone concerned in the machinery of the law be paid yearly salaries, as the judges are, by the State, and the costs of every suit be assessed by the judges, in proportion to the amount involved, not the time occupied, and paid to the State by the suitors, either loser or gainer, as the judge may decide.

Let this be done, and Eureka! law and justice are one. Then it will be the object of lawyers to codify the laws of the country, to save future trouble. Contracts will be reduced to the fewest words. Conveyancing of land will be done by simple transfer on a register. When disputes arise the case will at once be prepared in the simplest form, not by party lawyers getting up a fight, but by men in the position of judges, and having no interest, either to prolong the suit, or to make any side win, except the one in which jus-

tice appears. Principals will state their own case at once, instead of having it brought by a barrister who gets his brief a few hours before he has to state it, and cut to pieces by a better lawyer on the other side. Above all, justice will be obtained cheaply and promptly. From the diminution of work there will be abundance of lawyers to select for the judicial functions, and the number can always be kept in excess of the work to be done. As we now select lawyers for commercial cases, land cases, divorce, wills, criminal cases, so let there be courts with judges, assistant judges, and clerks for each special business, and plenty of such courts. In a country which cannot exist without law courts there is one still lacking which has for generations been exclusively the pride and glory of the Danish island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. This admirable institution is locally known as "The Reconciling Court." It is presided over by two judges annually elected by the citizens themselves. It sits once a week, and provision is made for advising the judges on points of law. It is imperative that all civil suits should be brought before it in order, if possible, to effect the reconciliation of the differing parties and prevent further litigation. On a Reconciling Court judge receiving a complaint from one person against another, both are cited to appear. In the great majority of cases complaints of injustice and difficulties about property are promptly settled here. Out of 383 cases brought before this Court in a single year, 226 were amicably arranged, 10 non-suited, and 147 referred to the Town Court. Of the latter number, however, only 25 were brought to trial. The disinterested, sensible, and honest advice of the citizen judges is so generally accepted without demur, that it is considered discreditable in any case to reject it. Thus the vexations of protracted and costly litigation, so often involving violent and life-long mutual

recrimination, are averted. Lawyers are never permitted to plead before this Court, and the expenses attendant on its proceedings modestly range from 32 cents (1s. 4d.) to 1 dol. 25 cents (5s.). The judges serve without compensation. The terms of arrangement agreed upon are signed by plaintiff and defendant and recorded. The conditions must be adhered to without any appeal. If these are not kept the sheriff proceeds at once to enforce execution. The marvel is that so beneficent a court of arbitration is not adopted by every nation in the lawyer-ridden Western world.

How easily such reforms could be introduced by men of ordinary sense; but the lawyers control the Legislature, and are interested in maintaining a system which is corrupt in its very essence, the feeing of lawyers by clients. So the disgrace, dishonour, extortion, perversion, delay, and prevention of justice involved in English law are all maintained. Perish justice, that lawyers may have fees. As stated in a previous chapter, we in China have a third of the total population of the globe, and not a single lawyer in the great empire.



## CHAPTER VI.

## BREACH OF PROMISE AND DIVORCE IN ENGLAND.

WHEN I began to read English in earnest on my settlement in London, I believe I owed my progress in the language more to scanning the daily newspapers than to formal elementary books. Thought I, "I am sure to find the most modern, cultivated, and readable style in these journals, for they go into the hands of the highest as well as the lowest in the land. Those newspapers that have a reputation are certain to advance with the times, in idiom, purity, force and brevity of expression; for the proprietors are shrewd enough to know that on no other conditions can they succeed in a country like England—over-ridden by competition in all branches—in making their printed wares sell." Besides, I found the news short, comprehensible, and enriched with the most piquant variety. All this helped greatly to sustain my interest in the exercise of reading the language.

The proceedings of the Law Courts were a never-failing source of amusement to me, and I shall never forget how much my curiosity was excited when my eye first alighted upon the heading of a case which seems to be of not infrequent occurrence in this country—entitled "Breach of Promise." I turned to the dictionary and discovered several meanings for the word "breach;" one was "a gap made by a battery in the wall of a fortification." That appearing not to answer the connection, I looked out another signification, "violation of contract." A "promise" I had no difficulty in understanding, for that is the same

sort of thing all the world over. Then I concluded, "these English must be dreadfully severe, for manifestly everybody who breaks his promise, or does not keep his word, is tried before jury and judge and heavily fined." This gave me a profound and even awe-inspiring view of British morality, and I must confess that though always a lover of honesty, I felt placed on my best behaviour.

But this illusion—quite pardonable from the very general character of the title of the articles referred to—for "breach of promise case" indicated the breach of no kind of promise in particular—was soon dispelled as I continued the perusal of the report of the trials. In every instance when the same phrase occurred, the reference turned out to be always to one lover ceasing to pay his addresses to another, and with only one or two exceptions, since I have been in England, the plaintiff has been the lady and the defendant the gentleman. Then this discovery brought me to a conclusion as unfavourable to English morals as the inference suggested by my first impression on the subject was favourable. For I naturally supposed now that it did not matter how many informal contracts of any other description were broken, as pecuniary compensation was not recoverable upon the latter. I have noticed the character of the law to be very accommodating to maiden suitors (I don't mean ladies who "propose" to gentlemen in leap-year) prosecuting faithless swains in *nisi prius*. It is rare that any regular agreement is drawn up between parties betrothed. The evidence which passes with the jury and the judge is usually of a merely "circumstantial" nature, extracted at random from a mass of love letters, "tit bits" from which invariably set the solicitors, barristers, "his lordship," the twelve jurors, and the gaping crowd, in roars of laughter. There was a clear case of a breach of justice decided *against* an honest plaintiff sometime since in a British Court of law on

precisely the same kind of evidence. The moral character of his claim was just as clearly made out as any case of a woman who produces gushing letters from a man to prove that he promised her marriage and afterwards forsook her, but there was some technical defect in the claim which caused it to be lost.

In 1858 there was a party of merchants in my country who agreed together that if one of their number should fail the general league of them, known as the "Cohong," should liquidate the debts of the insolvent member. An English merchant established in China at that time had 34,000 dollars owing to him by a member of the "Cohong" league who failed, but while negotiations with the league for the payment of the debt were pending, war between England and China was declared, and the Emperor, I fear, grievously provoked, in a fit of exasperation, solemnly proclaimed all intercourse of every kind with England to be at an end. Most of the English were attempted to be driven from the country, and all commercial contracts were pronounced to be cancelled. This terminated the prospects of the English gentleman as regards the amount referred to, which, in the exercise of a belligerent's right, the Emperor caused to be virtually forfeited by the general decree which he issued. After the war, the sum of £3,000,000 was demanded from the Peking Government by England on the understanding that, out of that money, merchants who had suffered by the decree in question should be compensated. But although the British creditor had proved his claim and demonstrated that the intervention of hostilities had alone prevented its being duly met, it was successfully barred by the "learned counsel" representing the Queen's Government, through a miserable quibble which did not affect the demand as a matter of equity. The British Government exacted from China the large amount

mentioned for the ostensible purpose of making reparation to merchants injured by the war, and when one of these very injured persons makes justifiable application for money of which the English Government is only the trustee, the sum claimed, having already been held back a quarter of a century, is found to have taken root in the Treasury, and there it seems likely to remain, the very clearest and fullest "circumstantial" evidence in favour of the suitor notwithstanding.

But only let a girl entice a soft-hearted fool into her net and get him to write sentimental rubbish, and she can at once have her bare pockets lined with a thwacking sum for damages. Here is a specimen of the evidence which is regarded as demonstrably conclusive:—"My sweetest pet, Kitty! Your seraphic voice and the tender impingement of your ruby lips last night upon mine, and the pressure of your lily white hand, kindled a flame which has burnt my heart to a cinder. Oh! precious ducky, Kitty! what can I do but confess that I am a prostrate smoking victim (not a tobacco smoker) on the altar of devotion, dying—not like the mythical duck in the thunderstorm, but like the fabled Phoenix in the flames—of quenchless love, never again, however, like that Phoenix to arise from the ashes and soar to the bowers of other beautiful and fragrant nymphs, but to be ever emitting the fragrance of my consuming soul to regale thy idolised olfactories." (Convulsive laughter in Court, which occasioned the fall of several excited persons from the gallery.) The barristers were seen to hold their sides almost screaming with merriment, several of whom in their agitation—which threatened almost painful consequences—let their wigs fall from their heads on the table. Even the venerable judge leant forward in vain attempts to maintain his accustomed dignity, and with his eye looking perpendicularly down on the bench, he pre-

cipitately thrust his pocket-handkerchief into his mouth, which made him cough violently, and thus his first ebullition of risibility was seasonably dissembled by being changed into the other sound referred to. This rescued his collapsing dignity and gave power to his uplifted hand, when he suddenly assumed a startled air, and commanded the ejection of those who had the audacity to ridicule grave legal proceedings. The mouths of the jury revealed every form of contortion, especially at the allusion to the Phoenix rising from the ashes. The damsel whose fascinations had caused this mingled scene, ambiguously covered her face for a few moments, but on her removing the handful of muslin which was instrumental in occasioning the temporary concealment, there were no signs of her emotions having reached the dew-descending point. She rather gave the impression of being a principal in a transaction by which she was hoping to derive the means of buying some new and choice dresses and a better quality of jewellery. It is hardly necessary to add that the judge speedily summed up directing the jury to find a verdict for the plaintiff, who assessed her ex-lover according to her conception of his resources, which, as he wished to appear to the utmost advantage in her eyes, he represented somewhat hyperbolically. The damages were laid at £1000. The defendant pleaded impecuniosity, and the jury—more charitable than the “stricken fawn” who prosecuted—returned a verdict for £50 and costs.

There is nothing in English social life that seems more contemptible in the eyes of an Oriental like myself than the unlovely and mercenary aspect presented by any English girl, seeking to be credited with respectability and delicate feeling, who at the same time lowers her self-respect by entering an action at law against any man for what is called “breach of promise.” If her virtue be violently assailed or



seriously tampered with under the promise of marriage, or if she be dragged by vulgar indiscretion in her lover into circumstances which ruthlessly expose her to the attack of scandal and the scorn of the heartless thing called "society," that is quite another matter. For such brutal and selfish folly the agent should undoubtedly be made answerable. But for mere wounded love, if that sentiment were deep and pure and intelligent on the part of the woman, what is the value of any *solatium* which a court of law could afford?

We have a saying in China, "An oil jar can be used for nothing but oil." I hold that a law court ought not to be used for anything but litigation relating to buying and selling, theft, assault, and battery, capital crime, and so forth. It is sacrilege to drag the emotions of a once impassioned and consecrated heart before such a tribunal, and true love is so self-abnegating a sentiment that rather than disclose its secrets to the gaze of a coarse world it would submit to self-immolation. The woman who, exclusively for the reason I have assigned, makes her appearance in a court of law, degrades her sex, and fosters the notion that woman, like a chattel at an auction, allows herself to be knocked down to the highest bidder. Besides, if any affianced maiden deserted by him whom she had hoped would be her husband, would view the faithlessness of her lover aright in relation to her own future happiness, she would only be glad that the capricious disposition of the man developed itself before the tie was tightened in wedlock. Instead of cherishing despicable revenge, her feeling ought to be that of unceasing satisfaction that she was saved from the galling misery of being the wife of a creature so greatly to be abhorred.

Control of the relations of the sexes, compatibly with the peace, order, and happiness of society, is the most difficult problem that social reformers and statesman have to grapple with, and different communities all over the world have

attempted their several ways of solving it. Nature has endowed men and women with certain passions and appetites intended to be gratified within rational and expedient limits; and the numerous instances of conflicting usages which have prevailed in different nations in connection with this subject, if minutely described, would form a most interesting literature to the philosopher and the philanthropist. Mr. Hepworth Dixon has attempted an extended account of the manifold practices of nations as to their marriage relations in his "Spiritual Wives," but so far from having exhausted the subject, he has barely skimmed the surface of it.

The pre-historic peoples of the world seem not to have had the sedate and "proper," or artificial, ideas on the matter which prevail in what is known now as polite English society. The very sexual relations which are now breathed in a whisper by pious Europeans and regarded by certain divines as among the most dreadful results of the fall of Adam—relations, however, in which they and their *confrères* in narrow, morbid puritanism do not disdain freely to participate—were cardinal elements in the most ancient religions, as their significant emblems which have descended to us unmistakeably show. In their innocent simplicity these very simple and primitive nations solemnly worshipped the mysterious creative power of the Universe through the medium of generative symbols, and in so doing believed themselves to be performing acts of religious veneration. The most ancient religious wars, which caused the earliest great divisions and dispersions of mankind in the earth, were waged over a question which was deemed by them as unspeakably momentous. That ancient inquiry was whether the Crescent, the Lingam, or the Cross was the most approved emblem of devotion to the Great Unseen Power.

If the reader be unacquainted with what is known as

Phallic literature, my meaning must remain veiled to him till he has studied this branch of human history. If he would learn the profound truth which lies at the root of the Hebrew story of the Serpent's temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden, of Abraham exchanging Chaldea as a place of residence for the plains of Mamre, of the ancient patriarchal ceremony of swearing, of the significance of Jacob's pillar, the locality of which he called "Bethel," and of the planting of "Groves;" if he would understand the deep meaning of early solar and lunar worship, the vestiges of which are to be found in the traditional symbolism of the respective races of Aryans and Turanians, in the legends of Osiris and of the Lingaites and the Yonites, then he must drop his plumb-line deeper than the popular author of "Spiritual Wives" has done, go farther back than Romulus and Remus, the capture of Helen of Troy, and the epoch of Terah, the father of Abraham.

Without a knowledge of Phallism, which learned Chinamen know all about, neither the Christian, the Jew, the Hindoo, nor the Confucian can get at the one root in which all symbolism of worship inheres.

But what has this to do with the Divorce Court? Just as much as is implied in the religious recognition by the nations of remote antiquity of the sexes as counterparts of each other, evolved in the order of nature for purposes vitally affecting the elevation, as well as the propagation, of mankind, purposes which will be splendidly accomplished when the laws, physical and moral, bearing upon the generation and regeneration of the race are scientifically comprehended. Well, if we go to Turkey we shall find that, after the manner of Abraham, Jacob, David, and Solomon, the Ottomans unravel this perplexing difficulty by setting up a harem and maintaining a plurality of wives. The Persians—now also Mohammedans—do the same.

The Mormons, with considerable modification, follow a similar course. The Free Lovers of Oneida Creek, and the followers of the late Mr. Prince, of the Agapemone, yield to the same *régime*. The women of Thibet, on the contrary, rejoice in the practice of Polyandria, or a plurality of husbands, and compassionate the fate of their Western sisters in being restricted to monogamy. The latter system, mildly qualified by concubinage, prevails in China. William Godwin, in his "Political Justice" and Robert Owen in the "New Moral World," both proposed on philosophic principles to abolish marriage altogether, and leave the highly refined and cultivated community they sought to inaugurate, to the control of intellectual, moral, and æsthetic affinities in the loving intercourse they should indulge. In fact these advanced reformers regarded the entire question of sexual affinity as abstractly and in the estimation of true philosophers one of a character morally indifferent.

Next we come to the Roman Catholics, who represent the earliest, and still the most extensive organisation of Christianity. They practically look upon the state of voluntary and devout celibacy as most acceptable to their God. They exhibit Him as only tolerating marriage and parentage because of "the hardness of men's hearts." If the theory and practice of consistent priests and nuns were followed, the great social riddle would be solved by an improvement of the population off the face of the earth, and the eventual revolution of the planet round the sun for the sole advantage of the plants and lower animals in that event left to inhabit its surface. But as the unexpected claims of the female who so unseasonably affirmed the holy celibate, Cardinal Antonelli, Secretary of "the Vicar of God," to be her natural parent, were generally recognised, it would seem that even among priests the affinity for the tender sex refuses

sometimes to dovetail with their practice. However, the theory remains. The Greek Church meets the difficulty by recognising the propensity in question as indigenous to man, albeit a sinful inheritance from Adam, and requiring as a *sine quâ non* that every priest, to make sure of his moral respectability in this respect, should be "the husband of one wife." The present view and habit of Jewish priests on the subject is much the same as prevails in Russia. The Anglican Church, with all its lamentation over "original sin" as adhering to every child coming into the world, persists in contributing as liberally as any institution in Christendom to the increase of the population; and it is proverbial that in proportion to the poverty and devoutness of clergymen, is the extensive number of their children.

The rule supposed to be followed by the respectable classes of Europe is that young men and women should maintain a perfectly chaste life while unmarried, and after marriage solemnly limit themselves to one husband or one wife respectively. The marriage service solemnly enjoins this, for the form publicly assented to by both parties contains the words: "And that you will keep to her (or him) as long as ye both shall live." This is further confirmed by a prayer in the Church of England Litany, which includes promiscuous relations between the sexes among "deadly sins." Now one would fancy that the moral, legal, and ecclesiastical fences thus thrown around the chastity of the sexes in England and Europe would effectually secure the end which all moral and respectable people have in view. But the extent to which gaps are made in the inclosure by lawless and impulsive members of both sexes renders it painfully obvious that the regulations provided to secure the mental purity and external propriety which all friends of order and propriety desire are utterly ineffectual for the purpose. It



is estimated that at least 400,000 females in England live openly by prostitution. The extent to which illicit commerce occurs in circles where the morality of the culprits is not generally suspected is distressingly prevalent. The Divorce Court, which has always plenty of work on its hands, flagrant as are many of its revelations, indicates but faintly the extent to which the vices and crimes exposed there are perpetrated in all ranks of life, not excepting the highest. Now it is manifest that the English mode of dealing with this profoundly complicated puzzle is ridiculously ineffective, and the question naturally arises, Why does it happen so, and how can the difficulty be at least greatly mitigated, if not entirely removed?

So far the ideas entertained by different nations in ancient and modern times, of the relations of the sexes, and the very different plans adopted, with varied success, to control those relations, the peace, order, and happiness of society that may be secured, has alone occupied our attention. The English theory on the subject, like that of many other peoples, is that any serious domestic alliance between a man and a woman ought beforehand to be solemnised by the ceremony of marriage, and that any specific intimacy not formally authorised in this public manner is immoral. The theory presupposes that without such publication before the world of the mutual intentions of the two persons, no respectable man and woman can enter into domestic relation. To take such a course is branded by public opinion as a vice or a crime, according as one or both of the parties may be already married or both unmarried. I have previously observed that there is, unfortunately, a great gulf between the theory and the practice of the nation at large, notwithstanding the vast army of preachers denouncing this and other sorts of sin from their pulpits week after week, the *espionage* of the police, and the constant stream of litigation

flowing through the Divorce Court, revealing a vast under-current of infidelity to matrimonial vows.

As regards the conduct and character of young men before marriage, there might be an immense improvement if mothers who have marriageable daughters would combine and sift to the utmost the moral antecedents of persons who seek friendship with their daughters, and drive, with scorn and indignation, from the hospitality of their homes everyone coming in the capacity of a suitor who should be suspected of having degraded himself by improper associations. But alas! women, who might be expected, where the highest well-being of their children is concerned, to sacrifice every earthly hope and prospect to that end, in too many instances look with unaccountable leniency upon the erotic eccentricities of young men who claim the hands of their daughters, provided only they happen to possess an ample fortune. Philip of Macedon used to say that there was no opening so narrow that a bag of gold could not pass through. If a young Englishman be of what is technically known as "good family," and has bright financial prospects, it is simply marvellous, the overwhelming amount of charity with which a fond mother too often is disposed to mantle the previous discreditable practices of the one she desires for a future son-in-law. She consoles herself with the thought that he has "sown his wild oats," and is going to "settle down;" that "youth will be youth," and that you "can't put an old head on young shoulders." If her own daughter or any other young lady she knew had led the same sort of life as that young fool had done, I wonder how much of the same forbearing and forgiving spirit this shrewd matron would have displayed! "Aye, there's the rub." For a woman to behave as this ideal son-in-law is supposed to have done would ostracise her from all the esteem and love in which she had basked in what is called by English people "refined society."

In plain terms, if a man be not a rude drunkard, but have agreeable manners, a handsome bearing, and belong to what is described as "an old family," and, above all, have a great fortune, and maintain, in company, the appearance of politeness, he may easily endear himself to the upper circles; he will be courted, and even deemed interesting and *piquant*, and, in fact, a sort of champion whom many ladies all the more delight to test their charms upon, because, as an experienced *roué*, he is proportionately difficult to conquer. But let any of the poor women he has ruined, even if they had the personal and financial accessories of this conquering hero, attempt to win—as ladies with ladies—the attentions of the same damsels who in respectable drawing-rooms throw their caps at the interesting profligate, and these "respectable" maidens would threaten to faint, call for *eau de Cologne*, or rush out of the apartment in horror, and consign the faded flowers of their own sex to Coventry, or to a place of a vastly hotter temperature. Such is life in this so-called civilised country. The joy of many a noble and innocent girl is hopelessly blighted by her immolation, at the wish of a vain and silly parent, who thinks of nothing but the wealth and rank the alliance will bring.

Now we are prepared to see at a glance the secret of the enormous amount of business always in a state of chronic congestion in the English Divorce Court. Two young light-headed mortals of extremely limited experience fall into raptures of love with each other, and sleep, appetite, and coherent thought all vanish, while the fever of love rages. They mutually accept this passionate flame as a divine proof that they ought to swear eternal consecration to each other. But how much of the sublime estimate they have formed of each other springs from a true appreciation, and how much from a mere reflected glow of the

imagination, is a question which, momentous though it be in relation to their enduring happiness, cannot be correctly answered till all the tinsel, blaze, and rhapsody of romantic devotion has worn away, and enduring qualities have been tested. It is rare, moreover, for the attachment to be equally strong and fervid on both sides. Perhaps Cupid's dart has stricken the young gentleman, but a reciprocity of consuming passion is not experienced by the young lady. Still he presses his suit with such *furore*, and talks to her so wildly about possibly fatal consequences if she persists in her refusal, that at length, partly from the gratification of being worshipped by her lover as a divinity, and partly from fear lest the rejection of his love should drive him to leap from London Bridge and drown his agonies in a watery grave, she tremulously consents, hoping against hope that she may find the life partnership happy beyond her anticipations.

Or it may be that the white heat of passion is on her side, and the response feeble on his. But she sets her Venus-trap to catch him, and conquers. "Love is blind," and the scales do not fall from its eyes till the hymeneal altar and the honeymoon are past, and the stern, naked, prosaic realities of life are encountered in earnest.

It still remains uncertain whether the lottery ticket has taken the expected prize. The chances are that the dispositions of the united couple may turn out to be incompatible. The illusion of ideal portraiture the one person or the other has drawn vanishes, and they chafe under the sense of compulsory domestication. The hunger of the heart is unappeased. *Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*, says the Latin writer. But what are all the corn and wine in the Universe when Aphrodite has not a hand in the heap and an arm round the wine-skin? If, under the strain of disappointed love in the married state, the bond of loyal

devotion breaks, and the man proves inconstant or the woman passionless and volatile, the floodgates of temptation open, and the hearts legally joined are bitterly swept asunder in divergent channels. The blighted and vacated soul of the husband, it may be, unbars to the enchantment of some vagrant Siren, or the lonely and loveless spirit of the wife seeks a counterpart in some stray and unlawful lover. In the words of one of Balzac's most infamous characters, "The household has become the tomb of glory" alike to husband and wife, and their ill-assorted union is at length dissolved by the fiat of the Divorce Court.

Now, what is the remedy for all this? Why, simply to adopt the method of betrothal universal in my country, *where divorce among 430,000,000 of people is hardly ever known.* The Chinese proceed on the assumption that it is quite impossible for two young and inexperienced persons, with the eyes of 20 or 23 years of age, to know the world or each other, or whether they are suited to make one another happy for life. They also believe that the persons most competent to judge the choice that is best for them are their own parents, especially if these be sensible and intelligent. If China has any religion it mainly consists in sacredly cherishing family life. The people are jealous of family reputation, and the custom they have of paying formal homage at stated periods to the memory of their ancestors, sustains their veneration for the domestic institution. The Chinese have enjoyed the priceless privilege of an universal and high moral system of education for many centuries, and the drinking, swearing, wife-beating ruffians, to be met with in Lancashire or the Midlands, are unknown in that country.

When the parents or guardians of the young candidate for marriage take the delicate task in hand of selecting a life-partner for their boy or girl, they very wisely



employ a professional "go-between," who is supposed to have access to the physical and moral history of the families of the locality, and who makes a study of the whole question of "suitable matches." The initiative in the negotiations is usually taken by the family to which the lad belongs. The official "match-maker" is supplied with a card containing the ancestral name and the hour, day, month, and year of birth of the candidate for matrimony. Napoleons I. and III. believed, as do many highly-cultivated Europeans and Americans at the present day, in the science of star-junctions. The Chaldeans, the Babylonians, and the Egyptians held profound convictions on astrology, and as my countrymen are so wise on many other matters, let us not imagine they consult the stars without sufficient reason. The parents or guardians of the girl employ competent agents on their part to make similarly necessary inquiries about the young man and his ancestry, in order, if possible, to be convinced that there is no hereditary disease or vice in his lineage. If, while this business is in progress, any unlucky information should transpire, the card is returned to the senders and the affair is broken off. If the result of the investigation be mutually satisfactory, the families provide cards and needles threaded with red silk stuck in them; and these cards are exchanged by the parents respectively and kept as pledges of the mutual betrothal of the young people. The cards are filled out with the names of the candidates and particulars of their families. After this, neither party may break the engagement without the gravest reasons. The red thread indicates that the contract has been finally arranged, or, in common language, that not their *hands*, as in Western countries, but "*their feet have been tied together.*" It would require many pages to describe the elaborately solemn ceremonies that follow in the betrothal and the marriage. But with us in China the presence of no

priest is required ; whereas in England the people put themselves in the hands of the clergy, like foolish slaves, from the cradle to the grave, and these gentlemen celebrate the great events of baptism, marriage, and death. The chief points in these Chinese wedding ceremonies are reverence paid to the ancestors of the wedded pair before the ancestral tablets, and the exchange of presents between their relations.

To prevent hereditary insanity—also an almost “unknown quantity” in China—males and females of the same family name are forbidden to marry. The Chinese never marry cousins or other consanguineous relations for *love* or *money*, at the risk of obtruding upon the world a set of squinting, stuttering, malformed, half-idiotic children as often happens in England, where there are tens of thousands of insane or idiotic persons. They insist that marriages between those of the same ancestral name—no matter how remote—would “confound the human relations.” The Chinese—ignorant though they are supposed to be by the bigoted Christian Missionary Societies—have studied physiology in its relation to sanity. For illustration, even if John Smith living at Land’s End could trace no blood relationship to Jemima Smith living at Cork, their alliance as man and wife would be prohibited if the United Kingdom were part of China. Allowing this to be an exercise of overcaution, the error is decidedly on the safe side. But when the marriage contract is completed it is rarely cancelled. If this be done at all, satisfactory reasons must be assigned for the step. Poverty or ugliness cannot release anybody in China from obligations connected with betrothment. But if the habits of the maiden savour of infidelity to her affianced husband in the interval before marriage ; if either should be afflicted with physical deformity, or should turn out to be a notorious thief, the other party can, under sanction of law and custom demand a release from the engagement.

There are seven considerations which justify a husband in granting a certificate of divorce, after marriage, to his wife, according to the ancient standard of China. (1) Unfilial conduct towards the parents of the husband; (2) Adultery; (3) Jealousy; (4) Loquacity; (5) Theft; (6) Virulent disease, such as leprosy; and (7) Sterility; though the two reasons last-named are not deemed sufficient for absolutely necessitating divorce. But there are three conditions, any one of which, except in very aggravated cases, renders all attempt at the divorce of the wife by her husband impossible. (1) If, while living with him, she have served his father and mother till they have both died. (2) If, after having been in humble circumstances, the husband has become elevated to the rank of a Government official and become rich. (3) If the wife has lost both her parents and her brothers by death and been deprived of her home. But it cannot be too emphatically observed that very few divorces ever occur in China.

Now compared with the confused and ill-regulated condition of the sexes in England, where natural law and common sense seem to be equally ignored by legislation, public opinion, and custom, surely I am not presumptuous in recommending the admirable, ancient, and successfully tested practice of my country to the notice of thoughtful Englishmen. It is evident that the scandalous state of English society in this respect, in all classes, needs reform. Theology has long scolded the naughtiness revealed by the Divorce Court, but without effect. Austere moralists have shaken their heads, but the flood of sexual vice rolls on unstemmed. What is wanted here is what has for thousands of years been established in China, a profound reverence for the domestic institution as the fountain from which society springs. The sentiment sought to be deeply and broadly cultivated in China by an universal school system

and the works of our sublime Confucius, is that every man and woman entering upon matrimony should realise the momentous responsibility of introducing into the world a healthy and morally disposed progeny; that all the members of a family should be mutually consecrated to each other's physical, intellectual, and moral welfare; and that if the due government of the family be secured, the nation cannot fail to be rational, loyal, and in all things well conducted. With us this is not a theory, but a simple fact which any European resident in China can easily find out for himself.

## CHAPTER VII.

## BACKSHEESH IN ENGLAND.

TALK of the hungry greed of dragomen, muleteers, camel drivers, and message boys in Egypt and Turkey ! There is no country in the world that can be pitted against England for the prevalence of Backsheesh. The extent to which gratuities are pined for in this country by multitudes who have no sort of reasonable claim to them, is a feature of national life which strikes an observant foreigner on landing from his vessel, and the last which leaves an impress upon him as a mental *souvenir* of his visit to and his departure from this country. Perquisites in some shape are angled for, if not positively solicited, at every turn. From the Government official, who arranges a contract with a merchant for soldiers' uniform, dietary stores, or making guns, down to the crossing-sweeper, hordes of besieging harpies *dun* in all directions. Now the very extent to which this importunity prevails in most classes of society excites strange ideas in a visitor from abroad on the origin of the British nation.

I have read that Holland was founded by beggars. If there be anything in the "Heredity" theory of Mr. Galton, the widely extended weakness to which I refer in Great Britain would seem to indicate—though falsely, I admit—that Englishmen are first cousins to the Dutch. I write no sweeping charge and mean no blame, but rather point the way to needed information. Never shall I forget my novel experience of Backsheesh propensities in certain sections of the worthy English nation.

Before I go further I ought to premise two things. First,



there are many noble exceptions to this pauperising custom, which, nevertheless, among some classes, appears to be as catching as rinderpest ; and, secondly, I have no objection that presents should be bestowed when they happen to be the real and irrepressible outflow of love, affection, gratitude, or respect, and when one can honestly afford to give them. Nature is always so true, free, spontaneous, genuine, and handsome in her movements, that the desire to manifest any one of these unselfish sentiments in a substantial form should always have the reins thrown on its neck. It is a source of unmingled delight to the loving, grateful, or admiring mind to expend freely hard-earned money which is one's own rightful property, in testifying the depth of some agreeable passionate emotion. I say which is one's own, for I have known shameless unscrupulous men contribute largely to a public charity with the cash of their creditors on the eve of their financial collapse, simply for the purpose of propping up tottering credit. Such conduct is a caricature of the divine and gushing self-forgetfulness of real emotion, just as a painted, scented, bedizened nymph is a vile and hateful travesty of a virtuous and modestly-attired wife. On the other hand, it turns all honest and faithful friendship into ridicule, when I feel compelled by the thralldom of custom to part with money for Backsheesh in one form or another, which I believe not to have been merited by the recipients, and which often tends to foster a cringing and dependent spirit in them. Take my own case as a passenger from China. Every man on board the steamer was well paid for his work by the owners, and I know the amount of passage money seemed as much as the fare and attendance on the voyage were worth. But judge of my annoyance on finding the second steward falling into the ominous habit of fawning on me very frequently as we approached our destination. I was really so "exercised" on the subject that I entrusted a

fellow-passenger with my confidence, and asked what the hireling could mean. My acquaintance informed me that stewards often became extremely sweet in their manner towards the termination of the trip, because they expected gratuities. The porter who took my luggage to the cab on the wharf, when I asked him his charge—thinking it the more profitable arrangement to leave the account to my honour—replied, “What you please, sir.”

Till I could obtain a house I stayed at a hotel, and when the waiter brought me my bill on my leaving at the end of the week, I could see the prospect of Backsheesh twinkle in his eye, albeit a charge for “attendance” was put in the bill. The chambermaid, according to a system of mutual signalling going on through the hotel among the servants of both sexes, learned that I was about to leave, and it was remarkable how busy she seemed to be close to my bedroom door just as the porter came up for my traps, almost grazing me as I passed. “Ha!” thought I, “Backsheesh again.” Then half-a-dozen fellows in swallow-tails and white neckties, and the head waiter, whose services I had not had occasion to utilise, all drew up as I passed, nearly holding out their hands. What on earth could I do but submit to be fleeced? I was duly warned by an Englishman before leaving Hong-Kong that if waiters were treated as they thought shabbily, they set a black mark against the man who neglected to fee them, and made him anything but welcome on a future visit. Very contrary to my inclinations and principles, I swiftly but sensibly crossed their palms in passing to the cab, and the hungry look on each countenance seemed to relax into a pleasing smile. By accident I omitted one, and he made a palpable excuse to run to the conveyance. For want of a better pretext, he took his own handkerchief out of his pocket, and asked if I had left it by mistake. I saw through the trick. He lingered for a

moment or two, almost fondly pushing a portmanteau under the seat, though it did not require to be further dealt with. I then put him through the same process which appeased the others, and off I drove to my new house.

I may mention, in confidence, that on settling in England I parted with my queue, and the operation of amputating it was performed by a hairdresser. Here again, in addition to the regular charge, I received a gentle reminder from the assistant, as he bowed me out, that a small gratuity would be acceptable. By this time the period of Christmas festivities had arrived, and then I really thought I should have been overwhelmed by the swarm of Backsheesh seekers who buzzed about me in all directions. The butcher boy, the letter carrier, and the baker's man all openly assailed my servant, imploring her to intercede with her master to give what they strangely called "Christmas boxes." Of course I at once went to the door and asked the first applicant what these boxes meant, what was their shape, size, colour, and contents, for I had never heard of them in my country. The young man to whom I first spoke astounded me further by informing me that they were not boxes all, but only sums of money! Not knowing how much the safety of my life and property in a foreign land depended on my complying with their requests, I kept opening and closing my purse till they were all served. A sombre-looking man knocked at the door about the same time, stating that he had come on behalf of the "waits." Again my ignorance had to be enlightened. He explained that he was one of a band who played instrumental music night after night in the neighbourhood for a fortnight, much to my inconvenience, for I thought that, like the Chinese, the English always went to bed, not to be disturbed, but to sleep. Of course I was afraid not to conform to the customs of the country; but I began to be in dread lest I might not be able to do enough

tea business in England to meet these external demands for Backsheesh. For the first month, in my ignorance and loneliness, it was a heavy anxiety to me. But then I was told for my consolation that in England people could get inured to anything, and this new view of the English race gave me a very high idea of their hardy nature. Even at the restaurants I found the waiters were not civil to me until I got into the habit of putting into their hand a copper or two over and above the bill.

In course of time I was fairly in business harness, and I found that if I was to succeed in taking orders, Backsheesh was to be the beginning, middle, and end of my success. Among the other forms of speech by which this custom was described to me in the commercial world was "greasing the wheels" and "palm oil." In my simplicity at first, when I showed my samples of tea consignments to the tea-tasters and buyers, I fancied the goods would be bought according to price and quality. But the difficulty I had to contend with was that the principals always employed trusted clerks to make purchases. For some time I could do no business, and yet I felt confident that in Hyson, Young Pekoe, and Souchong, nobody could do better than I could. But I hit upon the plan of inviting the "buyers" of the trading houses to luncheon, and very indirectly proposing to them a commission on the invoice, and then orders poured in magically. It was like the discovery of the "philosopher's stone."

I made the pleasant acquaintance, in the City, of iron merchants, Manchester warehousemen, gun manufacturers, purveyors of ships' stores, and gradually wormed out of them the confession that without Backsheesh they might almost close their stores. At these agreeable gatherings some instructive stories were told by one or other of my friends about the influence of commission in smoothing the

way to business ; and a few of these episodes are so interesting that I wrote them down and had them published in China to entertain my countrymen, most of whom spend their evenings in reading light literature.

A foreign ambassador in London was once authorised by his Government to purchase a large quantity of guns and cartridges, and he was consequently inundated by manufacturers wanting his order. Some of them hinted at Backsheesh, at which his pure-souled excellency turned up his eyes in pious horror and shook his head, and begged to inform those who tried to corrupt him that such proposals were an insult to him as the representative of his august sovereign. All the while he had his confidential agent, in whose name the transaction was being negotiated, and through whom he secretly pocketed 15 per cent. on the amount of invoice. A maker of ammunition went to Russia and bribed a gentleman whom he had reason to believe was the proper medium for obtaining orders from the military department. After waiting patiently for a while, he discovered, to his vexation, that he had been Backsheeshing the wrong individual. He then found a medium and conducted as skillfully and vigorously as possible the same process with the latter. All went "merrily as a marriage bell" during a brief interval. Large orders came and the goods were passed and paid for. But to his dismay the manufacturer received intelligence that a large lot of cartridges, exactly of the same pattern as those contained in the former parcels, were rejected and thrown upon his hands. How could this be? The mystery was soon solved by this maker recollecting that he had forgotten to continue bribing, and a private telegram wired to St. Petersburg respecting "Backsheesh" instantly rectified the quality of the shipment.

The reader will say these last illustrations refer to foreigners. Just so. But I have included in my Chinese



publication a long list of similar anecdotes about British Government officials which it would be almost a breach of hospitality to repeat here. But one is too interesting to be altogether withheld. Some time ago a gentleman introduced a certain commodity to a particular Government Department. The official whose business it was to attend to such matters found fault with the article, while some other Governments had praised and used it. The secret of his disapproval soon transpired. The commodity, as manufactured by an inferior maker, was already a vast source of profit to him. The Government had favoured through that medium the manufacturer referred to with such extensive and continuous contracts that it suited his purpose actually to take in confidentially the Government officer to whom he was indebted for this important accession to his trade as a sleeping partner in his firm. Many instances were related to me, also, of directors and other officials of public companies who took commissions from manufacturers on machinery ordered in behalf of the companies, and of solicitors instructed by their clients to sell property, who duly charge for their professional services in the negotiation. But lawyers often have a private understanding with the auctioneer who sells the property, for a large slice of his commission, which is always regulated in amount to cover the claims of the legal agent.

Some readers may ask what is the practical conclusion from these rambling observations on Backsheesh? I repeat, with all respect, that it is the symptom of a great social disease. It is part of a gigantic system of misplaced charity in England, which offers facilities for multitudes to obtain resources which they don't work for, and fosters a pauperised and abject spirit in thousands who would be nobler men and women if they had the opportunity of working for the money which comes to them from those who employ them, and felt obliged, as a rule, to give value for value in some

shape. Charity, where it is absolutely needed, and can be judiciously bestowed, so far from restricting, I would encourage and develop upon a scale incomparably vaster than it is. Reciprocal gifts, which are the unconstrained expression of friendship, love, devotion, gratitude, pity, or sympathy, are beautiful, and life without them would be robbed of one of its choicest charms. But I would sweep Baksheesh clean away as far as the mere formal relations between the serving and the served are concerned, excepting where one or other of the sentiments I have just indicated comes naturally into play as an impelling cause.

The obsequious, slouching farm-labourer, whose manhood has been crushed for centuries in England by "doles" of Baksheesh, would be a far higher type of being had he been remunerated more in the way of *justice* and less under the dishonest guise of *charity*. Many a poor parson, whose stinted salary from an unappreciative flock is eked out once a year by sending round the hat, would be able to *carry* a more independent and dignified mien before his constituents if the principle of the "labourer being worthy of his hire" were solely acted upon, and let what is raised for him once a year be regarded frankly as a fairly-earned part of his income, and systematically levied in that light during the whole twelvemonths.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## LIARS IN ENGLAND.

THERE are great liars in China, but they are mostly all at the ports, where they have received moral poison from the sailors and traders from Europe. My countrymen in the interior provinces have fewer temptations to depart from the teachings of the great sage, Confucius, who puts sincerity and truthfulness highest among the virtues. Our great and glorious Master, says :—

“Hold faithfulness and sincerity as *first principles*. When you have faults do not fear to abandon them. The man of virtue will not seek to live at the expense of injuring his virtue. He will even sacrifice his life to preserve his virtue complete. The superior man in *everything* considers righteousness to be essential. He performs it according to the rule of propriety. He brings it forth in humility. He completes it with sincerity. I do not know how a man without truthfulness is to get on. How can a carriage be made to go without the cross-bar for yoking the oxen to?” (The Analects.) “The words of the superior man have respect to his actions, and his actions have respect to his words; is it not an entire sincerity which marks him?” (The Great Learning.) “He who possesses sincerity is he who without an effort hits what is right, and apprehends without the exercise of thought; he is the sage who naturally and easily embodies the *right* way. He who attains to sincerity is he who chooses what is good, and *firmly holds it fast*.”—(The doctrine of the Mean.)

These were the lessons of my youth. When I was about

to leave home for England, that illustrious friend of my father's, Hwang K'aou, took me aside and told me that in the great commercial nation to which I was going I should find many persons with fine minds, tender consciences, and good hearts ; but that I should find the words of our great scholar, Mang Chefan, true, that "great trading always breeds many liars." I have found these words true ; both the first and last. Many of the English cultivate the interior motive-life of truthfulness. It is their nature to be sincere. But in all the social ranks I have found the vice of lying. In vulgar British constitutions it takes a very indecent, undraped form. In persons of finer feeling and education it always comes forth gracefully attired. It has a very extensive wardrobe, and wears the dress that accords with the present fashion, and suits the occasion. Though lies are so common in England, I don't find them defended in the sacred books of the English Faith. Quite the contrary. In the Old Testament, one of the Hebrew sages says: "Speak every man truth to his neighbour;" and one of the Christian sages says in the New Testament : "Lie not one to another." As the weakness of lying seemed to me so common in one shape or another, I had the curiosity to consult some of the learned English philosophers on the subject.

A popular author, Paley, whose works were long text-books in which candidates for Holy Orders were examined at the Universities, I observed, dealt very leniently with lying, and I am afraid that, as he was a dignitary of the Church, and, consequently, a great authority in morals, many of the clergy have imbibed from him free-and-easy notions on ethics. The infection of untruthfulness has spread through them, and by their teaching through society. Now and then the clergy do snatch a half-hour on a Sunday from their profound disquisitions on *filioque* and their elaborate

settlement of the difficulty as to the existence of Three Divine persons, without these being three individuals, in the Holy Trinity, to enforce the plain duties of sincerity and truthfulness. Still there is such a general deviation from the *rule* in the *practice* of Church and State that many worshippers look upon the clergyman, when he seems to wax earnest of in favour speaking and acting the truth, as simply doing "the proper thing," as they regard themselves to be doing in listening respectfully to him. But there appears to be a tacit understanding between the ministers and the laity that not much moral result is expected to come of this talking and hearing. Hence, till I took this view, I could never comprehend how it was that nine-tenths of the preaching in churches and discussions in Church Conferences and Episcopal Synods was about doctrines and ceremonies. But I now see the whole thing clearly.

Paley truly defines a lie to be "a breach of promise," though that phrase has now come to have a very limited, technical, and somewhat amusing meaning in England. The world would not take much harm if lying was only confined to a lover changing his mind about the woman he had promised to marry. Judging from a bachelor point of view, the numbers of couples that marry in haste and spend their married life in a perpetual state of wretched repentance, I think a good deal of personal and domestic misery would be saved if there were more of this sort of lying, even at the risk of somewhat heavy damages being awarded in the courts of law to the plaintiff. But after this vague definition of a lie, Paley, with a rare spirit of clerical accommodation, goes on to console his countrymen by assuring them that "there are falsehoods which are not lies," and one instance he gives in illustration of this is "a servant's denying his master." "In such instances," he adds, "no confidence is destroyed, because none is reposed." There's



a brilliant picture of the British relation between master and servant to greet the eye of a benighted heathen like myself! The English of the argument is that if a friend calls on the head of a household and the servant says he is not at home, no lie, according to Paley, has been told, for the visitor is not supposed to repose the least confidence in the statement of the servant; the conclusion forced on my poor Pagan mind being that servants in England are such a set of lying rascals, that nobody ever pretends to believe them. Nay, so habitual did Paley think the vice of lying to have become among servants, that it had ceased to be lying. It is only a harmless "falsehood!" "No promise to speak the truth is violated, because none was given or understood to be given!"

A second instance given by the same author of a lie not being wrong, or, in the euphuistic language of Paley, only a "falsehood," is "where the person to whom you speak has no right to know the truth, or, more properly, where little or no inconvenience results from the want of confidence in such cases." That is to say, that if we fancy anybody impudently curious about our business, to tell them an *untruth* would be no lie. The alternative of declining to make *any* statement at all never seems to have entered the venerable writer's mind. On the same principle, he says, "it is allowed to deceive an enemy by feints, false colours, spies, false intelligence, and the like. . . . In the conduct of war, and whilst war continues, there is no use, or rather no place, for confidence between the contending parties." These are the words of the man who is the author of the most lauded treatise that has been written within the last 150 years, on "The Evidences of Christianity." If the author's *philosophy* is to be taken as a commentary on his Christianity (by the shade of Confucius!) may Christianity never be allowed to gain a footing in

China! Here is another specimen of Paley's regard for truth: "Many people indulge in serious discourse, a habit of fiction and exaggeration in the accounts they give of themselves, of their acquaintance, or of the extraordinary things which they have seen or heard; and so long as the facts they relate are indifferent, and their narratives, though false, are inoffensive, it may seem a superstitious regard to truth to censure them merely for truth's sake." In the name of conscience, how, if this reckless licence of speech be compatible with confidence between man and man, are we to tell when men really *mean* what they say and when they *don't*? If the words may be accepted, though false, as not a lie, and as not involving the speaker in the imputation of being a liar, by what sign are we to distinguish when the words are to be believed and when not? If the words themselves be insufficient as an index to the real thoughts, winks or gestures should accompany them to indicate what interpretation is to be put upon them.

Paley's notions about clerical subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church are of a piece with his philosophy of truth and falsehood, and, I fear, have only been too faithfully followed by multitudes of clergymen, who, under all sorts of casuistical shifts, continue to *profess* dogmas before the people which they do not believe. But it is their ecclesiastical rulers that are chiefly to be denounced for allowing a wholesale system of moral corruption to go on, in which young men are called upon to declare, upon oath, their solemn faith in creeds which they have neither had the time nor the knowledge to examine critically. "Those," says Paley, "who contend that nothing less can justify subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles than the actual belief of each and every separate proposition contained in them, must suppose that the Legislature expected the consent of ten thousand clergymen in perpetual succession, not

to one controverted proposition, but to many hundreds. It is difficult to conceive how this could be expected by any who observed the incurable diversity of human opinion upon all subjects short of demonstration. If the authors of the law did not intend this, what did they intend? They intended to exclude from offices in the Church (1) all abettors of Popery, (2) Anabaptists, and (3) the Puritans."

Paley's argument was that anybody entering the offices of the Church while professing belief in the articles as they stand, had a right to put any interpretation on them he pleased as long as he did not belong to any of the above-named sects, who threatened the overthrow of the Establishment. Even the private opinion or interpretation of the Bishop who administers the oath of subscription or ordains the candidate for holy orders is not of the least significance one way or the other. The candidate need only be guided by the *animus imponentis*. "The inquiry, therefore, concerning subscription will be *quis imposuit et quo animo?*" The compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles, according to Paley, are not to be considered the imposers of subscription, but "the Legislature of the 13th Elizabeth is the imposer whose intention the subscriber is bound to satisfy." Now, how can we know the intention of the imposer except by the plain signification of the words of subscription as set forth by the expounders of the articles at the time they were compiled? What that signification is no one need be left in any doubt who reads the theology of that period. Most clearly those who deny the atonement and deity of Jesus, or impugn the divine authority of the Bible, were never contemplated by the compilers as eligible for any offices of the Church. Yet what do we find? There are hundreds of English clergymen who, every Sunday, consign to everlasting burnings those who deny that Jesus was "very God."

of very God, begotten and not made," and who are themselves, as far as that doctrine and many kindred tenets are concerned, decided infidels. Being infidels relatively to such conceptions may be to the credit of their reason ; but remaining clergymen under such circumstances are—explain it by what syllogistic figure they may—a dishonour to their manhood, and the hourly perpetration before the world of a gigantic lie—intensely aggravated because not simply *said*, but *acted* in that office which superstition has long venerated as the most sacred—the office of conducting the worship of human beings offered to the mysterious Power which maintains the cohesion and order of the universe—is discreditable in the extreme.

Forbid that I should saddle on England all the untruths told in the way of business. Commercial lies are a sort of small-pox eruption, which has spread, unfortunately, all over the business world ; but after what the Christian missionaries told me in China about England having a commission from Heaven to teach "the truth" to all nations, I confess I was surprised to find that there were any liars and shams at all in this country. But soon after my arrival I found the struggle for existence in London so great that manufacturers and merchants and shopkeepers were actually lying in all directions, and almost without cessation, in order to live. When I first settled in England I met a strange mercantile character in Great Tower-street, who tried hard to laugh me out of my scruples on this subject. He said, "Now you have come into this metropolitan fight for 'dear life,' remember that the man who can humbug most politely, without exciting suspicion and without running the risk of being found out, wins." I stared, and he laughed and said : "In matters of friendship lies would damn a man socially, but business is like a game of chess. It is understood that men may *do* each other if they can. Lies are the order of the

day in buying and selling, and no harm is done, for nothing better is expected; even our best book tells us 'all men are liars.'"

This startled me not a little at first, but though I never forgot the stern enforcement of truth and sincerity in my youthful acquaintance with Confucius, I got accustomed to the mercantile ways of this city; yet I have often wished that some system of pinching or other form of signalling could be invented to help a poor Heathen like myself to distinguish when a certain class of men are speaking the truth and when they are pursuing an opposite course, for mere words with some do not necessarily convey what they are supposed to do. Such a plan as I have named would save much conjecture and doubt as to the real intentions of liars. I defy anybody to tell, by the faces of such people whether or not they be sincere when they are talking; they look quite as grave when they are drawing upon their *imagination* as when they are drawing on their *memory*. Then the forms and grades of lying have become so varied that they have had to be reduced to a science, with regular technical definitions for the convenience of novitiates. I can best illustrate what I mean by a quotation from a highly-cultivated journal:—"We have grown so mealy-mouthed in our modern manner of talking that people rarely use the plain Saxon epithet which denotes one that is untruthful. That milk-and-water euphemism which now-a-days tones down all vigorous speech forbids our calling a man a liar, except in extreme cases. The expression is looked upon as an *ultimatum*, a *casus belli*; that is instantly followed by a blow. So we have invented a dozen circumlocutory phrases to express the simple *spade*. Thus the child tells 'fibs'; women 'say more than their prayers'; grown men are given to 'drawing the long-bow'; a politician who seeks to baffle an opponent by misleading statements speaks 'diplomatic-



ally'; a friend who skilfully manipulates his facts to serve his purpose is merely a 'master of finesse,' or one who 'sails rather close to the wind.' Falsehood has become more rampant than ever.

"There are, of course, liars and liars; all are not equally to blame. Perhaps, from the moral standpoint, there is little to choose between the *suppressio veri* and the *suggestio falsi*; yet we mete out different measures to the wilful falsifier who weaves snares and sets pitfalls, and to the simple liar *de circonstance*, who drifts into mis-statements as he does into nipping sherry or dozing after dinner in his chair. We smile good-humouredly at the latter; but the other we cut dead, or worse, if worse there be. Liars of the first category are below card-sharpers or habitual thieves. Liars of the other class are mere Bobadils or modern Munchausens, who hurt nobody so much as themselves. The world is full of them; of such we all number one or more among our acquaintances; some man who, according to his own accounts, has done more, seen more, read more, than any other man since Adam sinned. We are never angry with him, even when we have found him out; to state that so-and-so is 'such a liar' is by no means considered a damnatory criticism. We are surrounded with so much falsehood, we mix so much with men to whom lying is a habit, that we are carried away, and lie also only too readily. We like to be complimented on our commercial astuteness, and yet, if the truth were known, we are committed and bound hand and foot to some bank or speculative scheme which will one day ruin our reputation and our fortune together. Thus we agree that there is no great crime in lying; the guilt is only in detection."

There's a pretty picture of English business life, drawn not by a foreign, but by a native artist; thoroughly candid it is, but dreadfully puzzling at first to a simple heathen like myself,

who thought, from what I had heard before coming here that I should find England positively dull from so much sheer monotonous goodness, accompanied with the holy songs and prayers ascending every few days from 50,000 temples, large and small. After learning that the English were so pious, to read a description such as I have transcribed, certainly for a time disturbed my equilibrium. But I soon got reconciled to the striking phase of Western civilisation I have referred to, through the interest I afterwards acquired in studying the whole science of lying in English trade. I was soon on my guard.

My first experience of trade duplicity or acted commercial lies was on a small scale, as a housekeeper. I took up my residence at Highgate, and had the misfortune to stumble upon a deceitful butcher some distance from there on the way to the City, from whom I ordered my joints. Keeping up the practice I learned from my father in China, I always instructed the servant to weigh the meat when it arrived, and I often found it a good many ounces short. I charitably thought the first few times that this was only an awkward coincidence. But as it occurred again and again I grew impatient, and sent for the "purveyor" to tell him of it.

He was very frank ; threw the blame on his assistants ; but added that, as one in his line was liable to heavy loss from waste of bone and the tainting of meat by hot weather, he never found his customers particular to an ounce or two ; and, with a pleasant laugh to put me in good humour, he reminded me of a very significant English phrase, the full meaning of which required time to comprehend, "business is business." But feeling himself under close inspection at my house, afterwards he was conscious of always being on the brink of guilt, that is, in free English,

n danger of being "found out." So I had full weight from that date.

My next illustration of trade lies was in connection with the article of milk. Being of a mechanical turn of mind, I have long been interested in useful instruments of all kinds, and I bought a lactometer to experiment on my milk supplies. I saw in the newspapers one day the account of a milkman who had been fined at the police-court for "resorting to the assistance of 'Simpson' to supplement the white liquid which had been elicited from the cow." I thought this must be technical language, as I had observed that when any popular fraud or sham had to be politely alluded to the phraseology used had a tendency to become stilted and latinistic. On inquiry I discovered that my suspicions were correct in the present instance. "Simpson," the reader does not require to be informed, is a metaphor for the water-pump, but upon my benighted mind this burst with all the freshness of a new scientific discovery. At a party I attended later, the adulteration of milk seemed to those present not only a familiar fact, but a source of amusement; for I was challenged by a punster in the company to solve the riddle, "Why was the average milkman like Pharaoh's daughter?" I was too obtuse to trace any analogy, but some young ladies had the answer at the tip of their tongues at the same time, "because he draws a little *profit* out of the water." Soon afterwards I happened to read of several cases of this class of tradesmen being charged before the magistrate with being somewhat irregular in their use of water in plying their trade. All this determined me to apply my new instrument, and on bringing my milk to this test, I was hardly surprised to find that, over and above the aquæous element natural to milk in its pure state, an excess was shown of 50 per cent. of water. I felt encouraged to pursue my study of the technicalities and

science of trade lies, and the result is perhaps not unworthy attention.

My next experience of this interesting commercial feature of English society—as before, in connection with my early attempts at housekeeping—concerns the necessary article of butter. Of this I have partaken more freely in the cold English winters than I did in the hot climate of my native country. The doctors tell me that it “supplies oil and generates warmth in the human living machine,” and that if I lived in the North of Russia I might have to eat suet and tallow to keep up the generation of heat. That may all be true, but when I buy the commodity called “butter” I expect to get the pure result of churned cow’s milk, and not lumps of fat sliced from dead sheep and cattle, which are eaten by Russian peasants and soldiers. As my taste is keen I prefer butter salted; and till my suspicions were aroused I really thought that what I bought under that name was genuine. But I trusted to my taste no longer. I called in a skilled analytic chemist and paid him to sift the matter. In a week he returned to make to me the shocking announcement that the substance I had handed him for analysis was simply a compound of rancid salt butter freshened with pasty tallow and milk.

In my simplicity I feared I was being slowly poisoned, and consulted with him as to whether I should send for a surgeon to see what damage had been done to my system. But he laughed in that nice cheery way some English people have when they want to calm one’s fears—whether these be well-founded or not it doesn’t matter. He added that the process was infinitesimally slow and could be checked. I asked how. He replied: “Of course by buying butter of a purer quality.” But there was just the difficulty. There were no certificated pure butter merchants in London, and I felt that to be quite safe I must attach an analyst to my small

establishment, and have him operate when the tradesmen delivered their goods, or give up the use of suspected articles of food altogether.

This course I have followed to a certain extent ever since, and have substituted the best dripping. Indeed, I have been unfortunately obliged to extend the principle of abstinence to several other articles for similar reasons, and at one time was apprehensive that before my discoveries of adulteration stopped I might be deprived of all aliment whatsoever, and die a martyr to trade lies. But my analytical friend consoled me that my constitution could stand it better than that of a good many, and that the injury done to health by adulteration was almost imperceptible. He told me that a great English writer declared it was the fate of every brave Englishman to eat "a peck of dirt" during his lifetime, thrown into eatables by tradesmen in very tiny doses. He also tried, unsuccessfully, to turn the affair to merriment by informing me that when a medical student known to him once lodged with a buttermonger in the City, he was waked one summer morning at four o'clock by a noise proceeding from the bottom of the house, which he instantly ascribed to burglars. Without waiting to dress, he slipped down stairs, armed, with the poker, and, at last, found the sound to come from the cellar. To his amazement, on peeping in unseen, he perceived the husband and wife with their daughter surrounding a huge butter tub. He kept looking through the keyhole, and observed them busy squeezing the salt out of tainted butter and mixing it, in due proportions, with ground chalk, pounded suet and milk. The whole mystery was solved to the wondering student on his finding in the window of his landlord's shop the following day a large placard: "Dorsetshire fresh butter received here daily per rail."

It makes this story highly probable to read—as I did—in the newspapers lately, that a suburban shopkeeper made



a regular business of adulteration, and on his being accused of the practice by a customer, the chairman of the District Board was written to, and asked how the offender could be punished. The chairman called in the policeman whose duty it was to inspect the shops and summon guilty persons. The policeman replied that this grocer was quite an adept at this way of dealing, and that he had once before reported him to the authorities, but that since then he had become a successful candidate for the Board, that he might carry on his pranks with more security. The policeman further said: "Now that he is one of my masters, it would cost me my situation to report him, and I think it wisest to be quiet." While writing this, a letter came before me which has just appeared in one of the papers on the same subject, showing that the butter lie is becoming a serious nuisance. The writer of the letter is a tradesman who finds that, by refusing to sell the adulterated article, he is treading the path of ruin. He boldly states that the majority of his rivals in trade sell imitation butter without the smallest hesitation. He has been informed that not less than fifty tons of this stuff is sold weekly to the trade in his city alone. He says the attempts made to stop the imposture, are "answered by the sale of thousands of packages openly in the markets, and the demand is increasing." The lie is dressed with a fine name. This objectionable article is called "Oleomargarine" in the literary organ of the grocers, vulgarly contracted into "Ole Margery." It is said to be compounded of "the pearly extract of beef fat." Honest tradesmen can't hold out against their cheating competitors. Of course no one objects to the sale of "Oleomargarine" as long as buyers are frankly told what they are purchasing. They may then take it, or leave it, as they choose, and no wrong is done to those who deal only in butter that civilised people care to eat.

I have felt it right to give the reader a sample of my experience as a housekeeper in connection with the painful question of the adulteration of provisions. I am sorry, however, that the list I have given of articles delivered at my door that were mere counterfeits of what they professed to be is far from exhausted. I could startle my fellow-residents in the Metropolis still more with strange tales of the nasty poisonous mixtures I have detected in tea, coffee, sugar, pepper, pickles, and confectioneries. As for wines, it is almost impossible to escape the trade abomination we have noticed, without employing a thorough practical wine taster before we lay in a stock at any time. Much of this vile system of deceiving customers is carried on before the goods leave the foreign port, but more of it takes place in Puritanic England.

It would require a volume to do anything like justice to details under the various heads I have just named, and all I can pretend to do in the brief space at command is simply to sum up my allusion to these trade lies practised upon householders, by putting the unwary on their guard, and instilling in their minds—if it do not already exist—a wholesome amount of suspicion of the tradesmen who supply their home stores. If the patient Englishman were not very proud of his country and forgiving to the tricky enemies of his larder and stomach, the load of grievances to which his broad back is doomed would drive him stark mad. A sufficiently big slice of his income is already swallowed up in rates and taxes before he can devote a sixpence to the bare necessities of life. The house he lives in, the ground he walks on, the water, wines, spirits, and malt liquors he drinks are all taxed. In his wild love of liberty he allows himself to be taxed to keep up an immense number of gaols and police forces through the country, in readiness to receive the thousands of habitual criminals who

live the greater part of their time *in* prison, and only just such an interval *out* as may afford them opportunities of qualifying for serving a still longer term of confinement than before. Well, the poor honest Englishman has not only to contribute his share to the vast expenditure in the direction I have indicated, but he has to support other establishments quite as costly and questionable in their utility. I refer to workhouses, to which flow all the wretched, worn-out, idle, drunken loafers after they grow too weak, from dissipation, to fight their neighbours and beat their wives.

The poor law taxes him heavily to keep this gigantic machinery of misplaced philanthropy going—misplaced, I mean, as far as the support is concerned of those inmates who are there in consequence of their own foolish or wicked habits. Taxes, too, this submissive Anglo-Saxon is mulcted in to envelope soldiers and sailors by tens of thousands, respectively in red and blue cloth, brass buttons, and gold lace, and to provide leviathan ironclads, Armstrong guns, and cartridges for rare war-like eventualities. He is even taxed to pay the public debts accumulated by the reckless and expensive wars of his forefathers.

After all this and much more elaborate fleecing under official shears, to think that he cannot sit down to his quiet morning meal or indulge in one or two trifling extra comforts at his Sunday dinner without being too sensibly reminded that the very shopkeepers who are vying for his custom are also the instruments of spoiling his digestion, occasioning medical attendance, and shortening the already too brief term of his existence—this, truly, is a gloomy reflection. He goes to a draper's window with his wife and daughters to inspect dresses and mantles preparatory to stocking his family for the winter; he fixes on certain articles of attire, duly labelled with prices, confident that he has made no mistake; but when the card marked with the price

is detached for his satisfaction he finds, to his annoyance, that the *pence* are purposely inserted in small pencilled figures which no ordinary vision could detect a little way off, while the *pounds* and *shillings* are made so prominent as to absorb his notice ; and to his disgust it turns out that the cost of the material he and his dear ones had agreed upon amounts, perhaps, to elevenpence halfpenny per yard more than they were led to expect. In this way John Bull is worried and badgered over nearly every article he eats, drinks, and wears.

When, however, we come from that department of trade which relates to mere personal and domestic expenditure to the great arena of buying and selling all sorts of natural and artificial products, home and foreign, on a large mercantile scale, we get out of the frying-pan into the fire. The atmosphere of competition, falsehood, and cold-blooded, hungry, violent, half-mad undermining of honour becomes positively asphyxiating. Talk of obtaining money under false pretences ! Why, what is half the business done in great English commercial circles but of this character ? The buyer pays for one quality or dimension of goods ; the seller, in many instances, tries to palm off upon him something below the standard agreed upon ; or designed equivocation is practised, or some advantage is somehow sought to be taken. At all events, the transaction is, in nine cases out of ten, looked upon by the party who has most to gain from it, in the light of a game, in which your antagonist is to be defeated if possible.

All this is, unfortunately, so patent and familiar to us that even the remotest allusion to the subject appears stale. But could we not succeed in throwing some halo of interest around matters by trying to mend them ? If the *legal* signification of fraud were co-extensive with the *moral* aspect of it, I fear the calendar at the magisterial and assize

courts would be immensely heavier than it is. Yet, unanimous as we are on the proverbial universality of this deterioration of conscience which is daily proceeding at a dreadful rate in commerce, the experience of one victim of trading lies varies from that of another as much as one picture upon the walls of the National Gallery varies from another ; and this endless variety makes each separate story of imposition as amusing as the different tales in "The Arabian Nights' Entertainment."

What merchant or manufacturer does not bear the scars of impudent fraud inflicted upon him ; of course under the most unexpected circumstances, and by persons whom he thought he had thoroughly tested ? Here is a single case out of many that I might record, and with it I will conclude this exposition of trade lies, which might be indefinitely extended.

I would just premise that the heaviest losses I have incurred in business have been either from scoundrels who have come out of what, in England, are called "pious Christian families," or from deceitful rascals who themselves stood high in the exercises going on at churches and chapels every Sunday. The first traveller of importance I employed to take orders from large tea dealers in the country for that commodity, which my father and brothers sent me from China to trade in, was a great, commanding-looking individual, who impressed me emphatically with the solemn fact that he was a churchwarden and sang in the church choir. Coming here a stranger with a great notion of English seriousness and honour, I looked upon this man as having undergone the change called "regeneration," of which the Christian missionaries tell the less-informed part of my countrymen in the East. In my weakness, I thought that this religious change, which he regarded himself as having undergone, made his morality safe ; but I was



soon undeceived to my bitter cost. Yet this corporate mass of pulpy corruption could obtain a flaming certificate from his clergyman.

The case to which I want to refer in conclusion, however, had to do with the export of many thousands of pounds worth of iron pipes for the East. The manufacturer was a little, bald-headed, quiet, unpretending man, who used to address religious meetings, I was informed, in the black country, and who assured me that his only recreation in life was to go to church on Sunday morning, take a nap in the afternoon of the same day, and join again in the same holy services in the evening. It is not to the credit of English law, as the reader will presently admit, that this vile creature should still be at large, after robbing his creditors by utterly false statements three successive times, and so managing the affairs of his several bankruptcies as to deprive the creditors of anything worthy to be called a dividend. The very name he gave to his manufactory savoured of the nasal twang of his unctuous speech, and of the snivelling cant of his hypocritical life.

But it will be asked: "How came you, a buyer of this person's wares, to rank as a creditor on his estate?" He pleaded poverty. The price at which he sold the goods to me was very low, and as I was constantly placing large orders for pipes in his hands I thought, in my simplicity, that as he had delivered quantities to my satisfaction, it would be to mutual advantage that I should supply him with funds which could be worked out by him in the execution of my orders, with which I kept him liberally supplied. I was encouraged thus to assist him by reason of his plausible statements that his abundant trade necessitated his manufactory being in operation night and day, and that he was rapidly making money. He certainly showed every sign of great perseverance and industry; and I fancied I was

keeping him under close inspection, for while he had thousands of pounds of my money in his hands I frequently visited his factory, and always found affairs apparently in a thriving condition. Indeed, I was led to think, from what I imagined I saw, that probably I might be induced, under his persuasion, to become a sleeping partner. His smooth quiet way ensnared me. Before my large orders were nearly completed, however, alas ! the cloven foot was disclosed ; the satisfactory account I got of him from his banker was based on a false balance-sheet which he rendered. He overcame my reluctance to advance him more aid by offering me his acceptances. It was not long before I heard that he was being pressed by large creditors ; but this he denied. He put me off with the promise, day by day, of substantial security for the considerable sum he owed me. When he made and repeated this promise he perfectly well knew that his bank held a mortgage upon all his manufactory and plant, and that other security he had none. After a brief career of the most monstrous and heartless falsehood, he filed his petition in bankruptcy, and the examination of his books revealed that, while he solemnly represented me to be the only person who kindly afforded him any help, he had formed one of a ring of scheming blackguards like himself, whose existence even was totally unknown to me till the crisis arrived ; and it then transpired that they had been drawing and discounting inter-accommodation bills upon each other. They collapsed together, but not before involving myself and many other innocent and hoodwinked persons in severe losses by their fraudulent doings. Though the liquidator of his bankruptcy publicly told the creditors that he had carried on the most scandalously criminal transactions, his solicitor, by brazen noise and misrepresentation, carried him through the court in triumph, and the unfortunate creditors consoled themselves by " bearing the ills they had rather than fly to

others that they knew not of." They had to content themselves with a penny half-penny in the pound, and endeavour to avoid similar pitfalls in the future.

I was invited to a great dinner party one evening, at the West End, by a rich merchant with whom I had a large account for goods I used to buy from him for export to China. This hospitality looked very kind, and I have often received invitations to dine with other gentlemen to whom I am a good customer. They and their families always smile upon me, and in my simplicity I thought they had contracted a great friendship for me, and I began, at first to think how wonderful it was that a humble foreigner like myself should be getting so rich in English friends, till one day I wanted £100 to meet a bill, as my remittances from abroad were behind. I knew this pleasant dinner-giver to be a very wealthy man, and was surprised that he should beg to be excused, as his balance at the bank was very small. Ah! thought I, the truth has come out at last. This man's pretended goodness to me at his home is all a sham—cloaked selfishness, a social lie! He doesn't want me; it's the profit he can make out of me. This discovery of hollowness shocked me greatly, and in studying the matter I found this system of pretence to be a rotten falsehood running through English society.

My opinion was confirmed in speaking to a thoughtful gentleman I sometimes meet, who told me he had been invited to the same party I have mentioned at the beginning. Mr. D——, whom I am going to quote, is outspoken and candid. I had not seen him in the company, and on my asking him why, he exclaimed: "No, I have long ceased to countenance these gaudy humbugs. I am, in spite of myself, a misanthropist; I have torn down the scented gauze of smiles and palaver by which society tries to hide its vile

selfishness. It deceives itself, but it cannot deceive me. If I were a poor insolvent, I should never be invited to partake of the tempting specimens of cookery on the groaning tables of the West End. I have a patent telescope that sees under the swallow-tailed coats and through the brilliant shirt fronts, jewellery, silk, *entrées* and *entremets* of French invention. It makes me sad and ill to go into the company of my fellow-creatures. I feel, when in their gay circles, like a man at Nova Zembla in mid-winter, when, at long intervals, the least glimpse of sunshine comes out; he expects to feel the heat and to see the snow melt under his feet. But no; it's only dry, cold light. So it is among the bulk of mankind who join in solemn league and covenant to keep up this sublime delusion. All who aspire to grandeur live in a maze, deceiving and deceived. Now and then the naked reality flashes on them; but they are such miserable slaves to fashion—so dreadfully afraid to be thought irregular, that, while inwardly sick of the glittering, empty show, they rarely express their feeling about it more loudly than in a whisper. They remind me of a pretty story by Hans Christian Andersen, in which a crazy king takes his friends into a room where he fancies he sees men weaving golden webs for him, and the fawning courtiers, instead of frankly telling him he's mad, gravely bow, scrape, and assent to the ravings of the royal lunatic. If a man is deluded by a false display, such as the dinners you are invited to, he takes his revenge by making his hosts his guests in turn, and cramming them with falseness in like manner, trying his best to outdo them on their own ground, and demonstrating to them how much more hollowness he can pile on than themselves. This only shows how the game of petty fighting for social victory goes on, and will go on, among half-educated, pretentious grandees till the worshippers of money, dress, and equipage lose their heads. By that time sense will get a footing in

the working classes, everybody will get a rational education ; adorers of gold and jewellery will be looked upon by the improved race of the future as the foreign ambassador and his retinue were looked upon in Utopia, where gold was devoted to make chains for slaves and toys for children. Believe me, the strongest proof that Darwin is right in saying human beings are descended from monkeys is the heartless and silly antics they play with each other. They keep up the baseless fancy that they possess all the virtues they have mapped in their creeds and canons of propriety, by building churches, singing and praying before forms and shadows, writing fine novels, essays, sermons and treatises in defence of high religion and morality, and in denunciation of the evil which they picture as belonging to other nations than their own ; and so the phantasmagoria revolves. They laugh, groan, cry, pray, talk 'hifalutin' sentiment. But the *doing*, the consistent *doing*, Mr. Chang, that's politely called 'amiable weakness,' 'soft-patedness,' 'well-meaning folly,' and so forth."

I never heard such plain speaking as this in my life about any race, but I am bound to say that I have not seen anything in my experience of what is called "Western civilisation" to disprove this slashing criticism. I will just give a few instances of this wholesale system of social deception. I notice it's a great business with some British people, especially those whose "respectability" (I use the word in the conventional sense) is still young, who cannot trace any origin further back than their father or their grandfather, to invent ancestral importance. Now this seemed an amusing feature to me, as a Chinaman, because we have no hereditary aristocracy in my country. Station there is entirely according to each individual man's ability, learning, and character. Nothing else will avail him one iota as a stepping-stone to advancement. His father may have been next to the



throne, and he may be wealthy, but if he have not brains, industry, and goodness in himself, his efforts to stand on the shoulders of his ancestors would be taken as a symptom of insanity.

I sometimes read and hear of some eminent Englishmen who profess to be indifferent to the question of origin, but if they have no fine story of this sort to tell about their descent they are inwardly inconvenienced; if they *have*, they descant, I observe, on the childishness of boasted pedigree with the same sort of satisfaction that a rich philanthropist visiting a soup kitchen tastes the broth to be doled out to the poor with an air of subdued *hauteur* that he is not obliged to confine himself to that class of diet—thankful as starving creatures ought to be for it—but that he has an endless variety of viands to select from at home under the care of his butler.

The great author of "Paradise Lost" compared people who were always boasting of their pedigree to a certain esculent root which forms an indispensable accompaniment of the roast beef of Old England on the dinner table. He said the history of such people was like a potato growing in the field: for the best part of it was under ground. This is a rebuke which all Englishmen ought to be acquainted with; but many act as if it took no effect upon them; for one cannot be in the society of the sort of people in question for half an hour without having thrust upon him some grand story, often, I fear, either invented or coloured by their imagination, about who their grandfather was, or the vast wealth possessed by a cousin of their aunt's, or the high official position held by the great uncle of their sister-in-law. Very few of these varnished gentry have the courage of Dr. Johnson, when the good lady he asked to be his wife objected to the proposal of marriage on the ground that she was unworthy because she had had a relation who had been

hanged. Said the good doctor, with a laugh, trying to overcome her scruples, "Well, well, if none of my relations were hanged, plenty of them deserved to be."

I was greatly amused one evening, when dining out, with a lady who was doing her best to hide what in some English circles is deemed a leprous spot, viz., low birth. She was describing to me elaborately the extent of the house in which she had been born and the large number of windows it contained, which made me apply to her, in my own mind, the words in Shakspeare, she "doth protest too much." I at once began to feel doubtful about her ancestral greatness. I felt sure, to use a British colloquialism: "There's a screw loose here." The very strained character of her description roused my curiosity, and tempted me to make polite inquiries from outside sources on the subject, and the result was that, being weighed in the balance, she was found wanting. It turned out that her father had been a worthy light-house-keeper, and the immensity of glass reported by her to be in her parental mansion was instantly accounted for. This form of social unreality prevails chiefly among the actual *nobodies* who are striving hard to get into the category of *somebodies*.

Let it be clearly understood that I have met in England with a class of real ladies and gentlemen, born and bred, upon whose every word, look, and habit, upon their mode of life in public and in private, is stamped the true mark of the mint. The latter, I fear, are not so numerous, for some cause or other, as the former, but when they are to be met with they put one out of all conceit with coarse Brummagen imitations. The antecedents, inward refinement and unconscious ease, grace, transparency and simplicity of these *bonâ fide* centres of good taste and unpretending truthfulness, all reveal them to be "to the manner born." Ah! accustomed as I was to highly polite and educated society

in my own country, I know nothing so heavenly as an occasional evening spent in converse with this most pure and ethereal form of English life. "Above all," said Talleyrand to his young ecclesiastical friend, "no zeal." With them, above all, there is no constraint; no effort to appear agreeable, no nervous twitching lest the conversation should flag; no fencing, leering, intriguing; no affectation of knowledge, experience, birth; no shooting beyond the mark. Their native dignity and modest true-heartedness want no propping. If the reader can enter into my passion for social æsthetics as a foreigner, hardly another touch of the brush will be necessary to make the picture recognisable to him. He can, almost by intuition, catch, while he reads this representation, the calm, half-shy, yet decidedly truthful tones of their voice. If they become at all excited in conversation or in fluttering among the sweets of music or poetry, how gradually do their souls fill; what blended refinement and self-control they evince, all in keeping with the harmonious predominating feature of their nature—cultured truthfulness. Their dress, too, is beautifully in keeping with *themselves*, equally in the case of both sexes, according to the saying that "beauty is most adorned when unadorned." In this respect, as in every other, there is not the least approach to *excess*. All is neat, plain, and in good taste.

The sight of simulated golden souls, on the other hand, operates upon me like an emetic. They differ from the real ones as widely as the actor does from the personage he represents, or brass from the precious metal. They convey the impression to an impressible observer that they are uncomfortably and continually supplementing something about their bearing, which they feel to be essentially defective, just like a man who has the misfortune to have his sleeves too short; he is perpetually pulling them forward when he

is off his guard, from a painful consciousness that they ought to be longer. How some men, who drop their h's and have bestowed more attention upon money-making and finery than upon genuineness, thought and high-toned morals, try to hide their brutish natures by splendour. Their studs must be immense diamonds, the rings on their fingers are legion, their hair must be intensely smoothed, if not also parted in the middle. Their manners are either absolutely brutal, or else overdone with the primness of a Parisian dancing master, as if they had swallowed and digested Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son, and got up their style and speech at a mirror. The ladies belonging to this sphere of fashionable English civilisation also seem, beneath all their apparent enjoyment in society, to be ill at ease when in contact with those who are not electro-plated. In spite of themselves they are made to feel what fools they are. They are either gushing beyond the legitimate boundary line, or irredeemably gross. They dress wildly, are generally laden with splendour, and they are so monstrous as not to see that their very struggle to hide the defects of their up-bringing only the more strikingly exposes them. There is a phrase which expresses a sublime qualification in the eyes of these abnormal specimens of gentility. They esteem it the highest compliment they can pay anyone to say of him that he is "well fitted for society." Their mouths are shaped, their very smiles and bends—Grecian and Roman—have all the appearance of having been measured to the eighth of an inch. Oh! They want only to be thought so delightful! and by the very stretch of their exertion to be so, they render themselves simply disgusting to fine-minded people. They are walking social lies. You never can know what they are worth—which would be nobody's business if they didn't provoke criticism on the subject by their very pretensions—or what books they have read, or what

languages they have really acquired, or what countries they have visited. Their one object in life—to which even friendship and honesty and love and every human relationship are harshly sacrificed—is to make an emphatic *impression* upon everybody that they are very important, and this darling point is never lost sight of by them for a moment.

Two friends of mine, who knew they were going to meet a huge unreality of this sort of the sterner sex one evening at the house of a friend, laid a pretty plot to entrap him. He was always in the habit of assenting to every inquiry as to his acquaintance with authors, ancient and modern, whose names were brought under his notice; and after some experience of this tiresome blatancy, they came to the conclusion that he was a hollow brag. So they conspired to ask him what he thought of Miss Martineau's work on "Fortifications," and planned the conversation so as to make it appear that they were commenting on the contents. He kept adding his assent and his opinion in flowery diction. They next turned the line of discourse upon German philosophy, and invented several names of imaginary German writers from whom they solemnly declared that Kant and Hegel had derived the best part of their system. Among the names they agreed to put forward as the sources of Kantism and Hegelism, were Kaufmeister, Hohlmstein and Behrsbrück, which, pronounced with a good German accent, as they were by my friends, who were both natives of Prussia, passed off with an air of verisimilitude. The example of "roaring sham" and "vaulting ambition" in the way of literature already referred to drank all in as truth, and, at the risk of not meeting him again, both these haters of shams, when they had finished their unique task, rose up and politely informed this parasite on the skirts of intelligent and cultured society that he was a liar of a certain



unnameable description, and manifested their sense of loathing towards him by withdrawing from the room.

There is a great mass of charming people in English society who are beyond that sphere upon which the fiery glare of curiosity rests. They disarm criticism. They are above it. They never provoke it. They are so perfectly *natural*. Their very *brusqueness* is agreeable, because they affect nothing. They are *themselves*, "for better or for worse," though they are ever ready to acknowledge the superiority, in many respects, of some others. They have the courage to say "No" as well as "Yes" at the right time. They so thoroughly possess all the cardinal virtues which lie at the foundation of solid friendship that to apply the canons of criticism to them, which are invited by the affected hollow beings we have referred to, would be an act of the basest vulgarity and snobbishness.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE.

THERE is still left in the very heart of the City of London an unreformed British representative institution, possessing uniquely mischievous characteristics, that does more to shatter fortunes, character, and health, impair mental sanity, and spread agony among tens of thousands of the middle and upper classes than any other single fountain of bitterness, vice, and corruption in the country. I mean the *Stock Exchange of London*, which transacts an enormous amount of business daily, with investors, speculators, and their agents resident in every country telegraphically connected with the British Metropolis. If there be a *hell* anywhere in the universe, Throgmorton Street must be the mouth of it. The sulphurous fumes of its heart-rending, conscience-destroying, and mind-crushing excitement extend their intoxicating and maddening power far beyond the vicinity of Capel Court and Hercules Passage. Their reason-suffocating influence overpowers numberless victims even in the distant centres of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and America, as well as throughout the British Isles.

It ought to be stated, however, at the outset that the Stock Exchange discharges two separate functions. It does a good deal of *real* business ; but it is, nevertheless, mainly supported by the buying of stocks for which the pretended customer cannot pay if he would, and which he has no intention of paying for if he could. In the same category of its transactions is included the fictitious sale of stocks

which the seller has no intention of delivering if he could and which he is unable to deliver if he would. If the law required that the business done by "jobbers" inside and by brokers outside the "House" should be strictly confined to legitimate investment in substantial securities, whether foreign or colonial Government bonds, railways, steamship companies, mines, telegraphs, tramways, canals, docks, land, or industrial enterprises, the two thousand members of this notorious "House" would rapidly dwindle to skeleton-like proportions. But, without metaphor, the Stock Exchange is neither more nor less than a monster gambling saloon, in which there is mingled with a homœopathic tincture of honest trade in stocks a pestiferous sea of demoralising speculation. Not only is there no certainty of fortunes being steadily built up and permanently held by "operators" in this "Inferno," but there is more than a very considerable probability that in the long run, any gains snatched out of the fire of Stock Exchange gambling at one period will be irretrievably lost at another.

It is remarkable that the members of the "House," both "jobbers" and "brokers," as if slightly conscious of being engaged in an unwholesome calling, voluntarily apply to themselves and to the speculative section of their clients, the names of animals. Those who think they can best serve their own interests by depreciating particular stocks by sham sales are not ashamed to call themselves "bears," and some individuals of this *genus* are so coarse and mercilessly unscrupulous in their dealings that they might suitably be called "grizzlies." On the other hand, the class of operators who believe the state of the market to be favourable for the "rise" of a given stock, and who assist the upward movement by sham purchases, feel no sort of compunction about confessing themselves to be "bulls." A third species in this novel "development by natural

selection" comprises those who apply for shares when the prospectus of a new and promising company appears, with the express object of selling out the moment they see the issue price quoted at a premium immediately before or immediately after the shares go to allotment. Such persons are technically called "stags," in stock-dealing parlance; and one man in the "House" had so suggestive a countenance to the *habitués* of this museum of "unnatural history," that he was humorously known as "the missing link." This persistent affinity for the brute tribe in the designations applied by these traffickers to themselves and their wares is again shown in a certain description of bonds which are sometimes dealt in. When a security is based, for instance, by some needy foreign or colonial railway company in want of funds upon lands immeasurably below the value at which they are estimated by the company, and when such bonds are offered to the public at a price much above their intrinsic worth as a security, they are proverbially known within and around the precincts of the "House" as "Wild-Cat" bonds.\*

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\* The following from a New York financial paper, the *Wall Street Daily News*, cleverly satirises some of the Stock Exchange technicalities described above:—

"**DICTIONARY OF THE STREET.**—What is a bull? A bull is a person who talks much of the prosperity of the country, the vast earning capacities of the railroads, the big crops out West, and then eats a small sandwich for dinner.

"What is a bear? A bear is a person who talks much of the depressed condition, too many railroads, and that everything must go to smash. In the evening he occupies a front seat in the crack theatre of the town.

"What is a broker? A broker is one who, in consideration of a certain commission, properly sees to it that you 'go broke.'

"What is a put? A put is an instrument in writing which secures you the right of putting your money where you will never see it again.

"What is a call? A call is an instrument of torture benevolently

Another circumstance is worthy of mention as illustrating how saturated the Stock Exchange must be with a feeling of the debasing influence of nine-tenths of its business. It boasts among its members a talented caricaturist, who has executed some forcible satirical pictures containing unmistakeable portraits of faces familiar within its walls. In the leading cartoons published by this gentleman these faces are sometimes attached to repulsive looking bodies of reptiles, quadrupeds, and crawling insects in endless variety. The display as a rule, is that of unmitigated abomination and wretchedness, unrelieved by a single ray of genuine humour that could make an onlooker smile. A certain broker, who is an ex-M.P., and some of his prosperous friends, are represented as perched upon the branches of a tree, in hideous form, under the title of "Birds of Paradise!" So far from members of the "House" feeling insulted at this pictorial travesty of some of their fraternity by one of their own number, and tempted to indulge resentment, they seem rather to take it as a compliment, to revel in the appropriateness of the beastly figures, and to cherish the author as a domestic pet. These coloured representations of this gambling menagerie adorn the offices of many admiring members of the Stock Exchange. In some offices these pictures form one of the chief sights with which clients are invited to entertain themselves, the personages caricatured being described by the sympathising broker with evident gusto. There could be no truer index of the *genius loci* and of the paralysing nature of Stock Exchange occupations, as a rule, upon the moral sense.

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issued by a capitalist. The profits you thought you would make generally begin after it has expired. Brokers sometimes accept them as a margin.

"What is a margin? A margin is a sum of money put up on your deal. It has a *curious habit* of always growing smaller."



Seven or eight decades ago—before England had become so fearfully parched with a thirst for amassing wealth, stimulated by wild and widespread rivalry in personal, domestic, and social extravagance among the middle and upper classes—the Stock Exchange had scarcely emerged from obscurity. Its business was so insignificant as not to be honoured with the slightest mention in the press. In those days, and earlier, persons who had culture, professional standing and rank, were generally content with possessing, in these qualities, distinctions which rendered the eager pursuit of enormous wealth non-essential to their dignity and happiness. But with the not infrequent spectacle before them of rough and ignorant ex-occupants of cellars in the textile and iron districts, and *quondam* mercantile clerks in Liverpool, London, and Glasgow, quickly piling up fortunes running into hundreds of thousands, the classes of breeding and education, in too many cases, were irrepressibly seized with the *auri sacra jAMES*. They could not at first, however, shake off the hereditary prejudice against trade as lowering to the *status* of their family name and history. Accordingly, ingenious financiers were soon ready with a device by which a chance of making money could be provided for briefless barristers, retired naval and military officers and pensioned civilians from Government departments in India and the Colonies, with idle aristocratic and middle-class “waifs and strays” of some means, without the necessity of their doing hard, persevering, honest work. Some portion of these extremely “respectable” people had experience of winning, and, perhaps more often, of losing on the turf. But betting on horses or on cards was so evidently outside the range of real business, and belonging to the sphere of pure gambling, that ventures of that sort, as a means of living, or of supplementing the income of a man brought up to despise manufactures and trade, could never be allied to decent society.

The railway mania arose in 1844. This was quickly followed by innumerable other enterprises, great and small, for which money must be subscribed and companies could be formed to work. Dealing in the shares and debentures of such undertakings had the advantage to dignified "men about town," living by their wits, as well as to their friends, of having at least the appearance of genuine business. A dashing speculator need feel no shame in saying, in any society, that he had *bought* or *sold* so many "North-Westerns," "Pennsylvanians," "Turks," "Egyptys," "Honduras," or "Vans." The uninitiated in general do not know that the transaction did not require him to take up or pay for the stock. On its merits this pretended purchase, in the case of men of his type, could not possibly differ in the smallest degree from staking thalers on the *roulette* table at the *Kursaal* of Baden Baden, or manipulating cards in *baccarat*, or backing a horse at the "Derby." In each instance he is in grave danger of getting financially beyond his depth. But on the Stock Exchange discredited gambling nomenclature is not used. The "cover" this man above work places with his broker is put in a regular ledger to his credit; and so virtuous-looking an act produces a very different impression upon the mind and conscience of our high-toned friend from covering the squares at a *rouge et noir* board with gold napoleons. But to anyone looking under the surface the position, tested by the principles of commercial morality, is practically the same. In the two dealings he risks his money amidst a thousand contingencies, the majority of which are against him. In what is known as legitimate commerce there are doubtless very grave risks also to be encountered, but, as a rule, under no such objectionable conditions. If a straightforward tradesman has an article to sell, he asks himself these questions:—"(1) Does the article really belong to

me ; or, if I have not actually paid for it, is there a reasonable prospect of my being able to do so? (2) Am I reserving to myself a gross profit that will meet expenses and leave a fair margin? (3) Is the person who buys of me worthy of confidence?" Having done his best to answer these inquiries to his satisfaction, no man can blame him, even if, from some cause impossible for him to foresee, the negotiation should result in a loss.

The vast bulk of Stock Exchange business belongs to the category of unqualified gambling. If one "bear" a stock he may think there are intrinsic reasons why the price of it should fall. But the currents of speculation in any given security, whether "Home" or "Foreign" or "International," are necessarily controlled by such an infinite variety of cross-purposes, that our operator has no such moderately safe data to guide him as a manufacturer or a merchant would have in disposing of his goods to a well-accredited customer. For aught the Stock Exchange schemer can know to the contrary a "bull" circle may be formed on the very chance of "catching the bears" among whom he ranks, and whose designs the "bulls" seek to frustrate, or the "little game" may be *vice versa*. He may have no access just to that particular surprise, which is to be immediately exploded upon the market, and which will instantly change the whole complexion of the speculation in hand, suddenly turning events against him. I care not how shrewd he is or how successful he may have been for a time in this "Devil's work," he must for the most part inevitably grope in the dark in what he is doing, and probabilities are on the side of his being, sooner or later, when he least expects it, carried away by feeling and erroneous calculation into the vortex of ruin.

Hence, it is estimated that the speculative clients of a broker are cleared out by losses against which they are no

longer able to bear up, on an average, say, four years. But in the interval a fresh crop of fools has risen, who have to learn wisdom through the same fiery discipline and experience as their predecessors, and end their fanatical gain-hunting career in the same quagmire. Yet, as an evidence that the golden *Jaganât* of England, MONEY, is the one divinity at whose shrine noble and plebeian blood mingles in common sacrifice, scions of the very oldest and noblest of British houses "dance attendance" as stock-brokers on the wealthy grandsons of Jews, whose grand-sires were born in the old-clothes quarter of Frankfort only in the middle of last century. A son (now deceased) of one Duke, who was also nephew of another Duke, grandson of two older Dukes, and brother-in-law to the Queen's daughter, was the member of a stockbroking firm who do business in stocks for the wealth-adoring Rothschilds. A member of the House of Lords was, or still is, associated with this institution, which incites to such appalling financial recklessness and degradation. The nephews of peers and Baronets in their own right, freely "rub shoulders" in the "House" with low-born "cads," who don't know who their fathers were. The sons even of holy clergymen are to be met with in this "Noah's Ark"—of parents who, with solemn looks and unearthly whine, declare every Sunday from their pulpits that this world is a "vain show" a "Baca," and a "Bochim," which is passing away, and that their hearers should "take no thought for to-morrow!" Graduates of Oxford and Cambridge are to be found among the hungry and motley throng who holloa themselves hoarse from morning to night in buying and selling for "bulls" and "bears."

Of one thing we may be sure. The monotony of deception and humbug must often be relieved to the latter class by the vivid illustrations they must witness daily of the

Tartarean punishments made familiar to them by their study of classical mythology. "What is the result of your experiences of that 'Pandemonium' over there?" I said one day to a cadaverous and care-worn devotee of speculation, whom I casually met in Throgmorton-street. "Well," he replied, "I have had thirty years' connection with the 'House,' and I can only compare myself to one pouring water through a sieve." There are many thousands who can bear a similarly dismal testimony, and in the mind of the University man there is spontaneously conjured up the image of the fifty daughters of Dānāus, who were condemned to convey perpetually from the well full pitchers and empty them into a huge tub, from which the contents instantly escaped through a hole in the bottom. Another man I once saw who had "bulled" *Egypt*s until he had in his grasp a clear profit of £60,000. But Stock Exchange voracity usually grows with what it feeds upon, and accordingly this financial *Oliver Twist* could not be satisfied. Meanwhile the market quickly declined, and instead of laying hold of the prize when it was within his reach, he went on "carrying over" his bonds until he lost by his misguided avarice nearly as much as he would have gained by "taking his profit" when he could have done so. Could counterpart be more striking of the thirsty Tantalus, steeped in the very midst of the refreshing element up to his chin; but when he sought to allay his thirst, the water always sank before a drop was allowed to moisten his lips? Sisyphus rolling up his stone only to see it descend again is reproduced daily in miniature on the mental retina of the classical speculator. In Mexican and United States Rails, Anglo-American Brush Lights, Indian, Australian, and African Mines, Australian Banks and Government securities, and Brighton "A's," there is realised to many an unlucky "bull" and "bear," who has lost heavily through the startling fluctuations to which these and many other



securities have been subject, the Medusa's Head which turned those who looked at it into stone, and the picture of the Eumenides avenging themselves with relentlessly cruel caprice upon their victims. The man who, fortnight by fortnight, feels goaded on to pay, as the case may be, his inevitable "contango" or "backwardation," plus his broker's commission, in the forlorn hope that the market will yet favour him, may not inaptly be compared to Ixion writhing on the revolving wheel, or Prometheus chained to the Akrokeraunian rock, upon whose liver the vulture incessantly preyed.

As a Chinaman, the variety of agonies incident to Stock Exchange experience revives reminiscences of scenes practised by the Buddhists and Janists in my native land. Every year there is a celebration in North China conducted by the priests of those religions, to which many of the ignorant classes belong. Just as Roman Catholics in the West are taught to believe that by paying money to their religious guides, and saying many prayers, they can alleviate the sufferings of their friends and relations in Purgatory, so the Buddhist and Janist ecclesiastics lead the credulous to believe that they can mitigate or entirely extinguish the woes to which their kindred may be exposed in the ten departments of the Buddhist hell, by performing the rites of "The Universal Rescue." When this ceremony is conducted on a large scale the punishments of wicked spirits in another world are openly depicted by the preparation of elaborate images moved by mechanism. One spirit is represented as enduring a flagellation with the bamboo; another as being fried in a kettle of oil; another is being pounded in a large mortar; another is being sawn asunder; others are laid on a board full of sharp nails, or flung on a hill of knives, while others may be seen in the act of transmigration, one part of the body being human and the other resembling a part of some animal.

But the distressing consideration is that while this is only a topic of superstitious legends, the ineffable sorrow and fraud which centre around the Stock Exchange are stern realities. One day, a jobber, broker, or client has an embarrassing large balance at his banker's, and regards uninterrupted prosperity as absolutely assured to him. He cannot get a house large enough or supplied with sufficiently gorgeous articles of furniture and *vertu* to satisfy his ambition, or a stud of horses too costly for hunting and driving purposes, or a *chef* too artistic in *cuisine* for his kitchen. His brain is racked to devise methods by which he can attract personages of title and station to his table and astound them by the overwhelming luxury in which he revels. In a few months afterwards the large amount of stocks he "continues" tumble, and one is not surprised to learn that he cannot pay his "differences," and that his credit with his bankers has fallen to zero.

Another case is announced of a heavy mercantile failure, and it is ominously stated through the press that the liabilities to which the house succumbed were not incurred in the regular course of business, but due to Stock Exchange speculations.

A bank manager has absconded after having proved to be faithful to his employers for twenty years. The siren voice of some broker enticed him in an unguarded moment from the sober paths of legitimate business and investment. His first transaction turned out "trumps." He had fairly set sail on a tempestuous ocean without rudder or compass, and was soon at the mercy of the fickle elements. He wins again and plunges deeper. Next time there is a loss, but his obliging broker comforts him with the reflection that the drop in price is only very temporary. He is advised not to dispose of the stock, but rather buy more "to average." When the next "account" day comes round, he finds

himself further still on the wrong side. Subsequently there is a slight improvement, but he is, as yet, far from adjusting the adverse balance. He is on a fatal slope. His mind has lost its accustomed coolness. He must now go forward, let consequences be what they may. The loss he feels is too heavy to be "cut." He grows desperate. His liabilities are infinitely beyond his means, and the aid of his friends to meet. His broker is also heavily involved. Clutching at what is shown to be a baseless trust—that some bud of promise will spring up amidst the dense thorns of his troubles and disappointments—he and his broker together resort to provisional measures for keeping themselves afloat until the vexing caprice of fortune changes. They get one advance after another on what securities they can command. The broker happens to have some bonds belonging to other clients, which have long been in his keeping without being asked for. He may, he ventures to think, pawn them for the very brief interval in which, it is vainly imagined, they are wanted, in order to raise money to tide over his difficulties. Lo! the pledged bonds, too, have gone into the bottomless abyss. Cannot the bank manager render assistance personally or through friends? For the first time in his life his wits are at work to commit fraud in the struggle to obtain relief from his alarming embarrassments. There are securities to which he has access in the bank safe, too numerous for the directors to be at the trouble of minutely checking; but one of the board must, by the rules of the establishment, be present when the bonds are withdrawn by the manager under pretence of their being returned to their rightful owners. The manager provides against the risk of detection by inventing a lie. He informs the director that the loan against which the bonds are held has just been paid off. The securities are transferred to his colleague in speculation

for the purpose of liquidating his growing Stock Exchange "differences."

As these go on increasing, the felonious abstraction of more securities is demanded, until the aggregate is hopelessly melted, amounting to many tens of thousands of pounds. Yet the waters of trouble only get deeper. The day of the bank audit is at hand. Can the public auditor be thrown off his guard? No. He actually finds a large quantity of securities missing. Under pretence of going somewhere to find and restore the missing property, the manager decamps. A reward is offered for his apprehension. If he should be caught, or give himself up, he is sent to prison for fourteen years. In any event he closes his days a wretched and a ruined outcast, and his dependent family is engulfed in the suffering and disgrace of his misdeeds. Or, perhaps, after disappearing, his suicide is heard of; his last moments being spent in cursing the hour when he first fell into the snares of Stock Exchange harpies, and became learned in "puts," "calls," "options," premiums for "deferring payment," and for "postponing delivery." I wish I could say that the main features of the picture I have drawn were ideal. But, unfortunately, it is drawn from life.

One class in particular are often found among the bleeding victims in these demoniacal shambles. I refer to toiling and thrifty returned emigrants, who, as the fruit of thirty or forty years' struggle and self-denial in the Colonies or India, bring home with them a substantial competency. Having spent a long life in some lawful pursuit, they naturally conclude that the profession immediately devoted to the selection of investments for clients in England must be singularly free from dark arts and entirely worthy of confidence. I dare not say that there may not be a good sprinkling of brokers who are entirely above suspicion, and

among that number are conspicuous those who confine themselves to the *bonâ fide* investment of capital, as distinguished from those who depend largely for business on speculative accounts. But I do say that those who do not exclude speculative clients are open to the gravest temptation to surrender themselves to that unscrupulous, heartless, mendacious policy by which they ultimately bring themselves and those associated with them, in too many instances, to irretrievable destruction. Even, however, where fortunes have been quickly attained by some *fluke*, I have hardly ever known these to be enduring, or to be an unmingled advantage to the possessor while they last. When an improvement in a man's financial position is effected by protracted labour, the mind is trained slowly by the very patience and forethought exercised in his efforts, to use the wealth acquired with economy, and without ostentation. Thus a rare sweetness is imparted to the boon toiled for. But if such a change has been brought about suddenly, without labour and by a mere stroke of good luck, the probability is that money so obtained will be heedlessly squandered, and its effect upon its owner and his family will be to breed vulgar conceit and display, rendering them offensive in the eyes of all reasonable citizens.

As an example of the nefarious practices not uncommon in the "House" when the end in view is artificially to raise or depress any security, the formation of "bull" and "bear" rings may be mentioned. The *modus operandi* is pretty much alike in both cases. The secret group is formed, I will suppose, to "rig" Mexican Government Three per Cents. Arrangements are made beforehand with some interested correspondent in Mexico to send an ambiguous telegram when the President's speech has been delivered at the opening of the Cortes, conveying an impression capable of a very favourable interpretation, in reference to some



alleged scheme to be taken in hand by the Government for the settlement of the public debt of that country. The arrival of the concocted telegram is systematically arranged beforehand. It is also understood that it should be so framed that when the first and favourable meaning intended to be drawn from it by the London Market has served its purpose to the designing clique, the parties shall, at the interval of about a fortnight, receive a more definite explanation by wire, which, however, is wilfully constructed to have diametrically opposite effect upon the stock. But in the first instance, man-traps and spring-guns are carefully laid to catch alike gentle and simple among the unwary. For some weeks previous to the opening of the Mexican Legislative Session the "ring" quietly keep "picking up" the stock in moderate parcels, at the same time rather affecting to disparage the security than otherwise until they are "loaded." Now they slowly veer round upon a different tack. They move about, but so as not to excite suspicion, among influential jobbers and brokers, hinting mysteriously that something of a nature satisfactory to the bondholders is going to be officially declared by the Mexican Government. Rumours to this effect are stealthily but industriously spread outside by brokers' *touts*, who run about the offices of speculating merchants, financiers, and others, to give them "straight tips." Intimations find their way sometimes through unsuspecting City editors into the leading daily press that persistent buying of Mexicans is going on from the provinces and Paris, as well as in London, in anticipation of some early compromise of the debt being proposed by the President.

A more cautious class of operators who had previously remained deaf to the talk within the "House," after seeing references to the matter in the newspapers, begin to think the rumours may after all have something in them. Up goes

the stock a point or two higher. At length the manufactured telegram previously whispered about actually reaches some firm supposed to be in communication with the Mexican Government. The precious document is duly published. The presidential speech has been delivered and some declaration about the public debt is believed to have been made. A further extensive accession of miscellaneous buyers takes place in consequence. Now the "ring" or syndicate concerned in planning the "job" begin steadily to "unload," pocketing, perhaps, the handsome profit of £4 or £5 on every nominal £100 bond, the advance being, say, from the quotation of £15 to £20.\* Meanwhile, the initiated, who still repose in the accuracy of the intelligence received, though seeing the bonds recede, fancy that by continuing to hold they will not only recoup their loss but "get out" at a good profit. Alas! poor simpletons! they know not the fresh disappointment and disaster in store for them.

After the first telegram has accomplished the misleading object its authors had contemplated, and they have "bagged" their plunder, another act in the melodrama has to be performed. The work Penelope did at night is undone in the morning. To the transient delight of the unfortunate dupes the price of the bonds is actually observed to be recovering. They are profoundly ignorant that the original crew who "rigged" the stock are but preparing by a new manœuvre to send it down to a much lower level. Now they are putting their guns in position for firing off the second telegram, which, by concerted action here and in Mexico, is timed to be received on a certain day. When stock has again been "laid down" by the Syndicate, its

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\* These remarks were strictly applicable to Mexico when they were written, but are, happily, inapplicable now.

emissaries start on their mission for spreading doubts through the market as to whether anything was really said by the President of the Republic in his inaugural address from which the bondholders could derive comfort. They advise that the bonds should no longer be held, as after all there may be no truth in the rumoured opening of negotiations by Mexico for settling with her creditors. The password goes round the "House" to sell. Brokers wire their clients in the provinces that "Mexicans" are falling. To complete the impending crash in the stock, the awaited telegram comes, stating emphatically that the message previously sent had evidently been misread, since there is no present intention on the part of the Government to deal with the question of the debt. Selling then becomes general, almost developing into a panic. The swindling confederacy, who began to dispose of stock at 20, have gone on parting with large blocks of it at various figures down to 13 or 14, by which they have reaped a second harvest perhaps even greater than the previous one when they "bulled" the stock.

There are squads of unscrupulous persons who in this way bring elaborate organisation to bear upon the manipulating of certain excitable stocks once or twice every year, netting by the operation tens of thousands, extracted, by deliberately false representations, from the purses of their guileless victims. Indeed, it not unfrequently happens that even when a basis actually exists for an upward movement in a stock the "rise" is first carried too high purposely that it may afterwards be depressed unduly by the same class of operators.

Lest the relation of the "jobber" to the "broker" should not be quite free from obscurity, it may be well to explain that it is the province of the former in the market to be always ready to "make a price" in the particular description

of stocks in which he deals, to the latter when he enters the "House" with an order to be executed.

In the offices of speculative brokers a heterogeneous group of Micawber-looking clients may be seen, all day long, hanging round the telegraphic instrument which records the prices, at which, from minute to minute, business is done in the Stock Exchange. Their eyes and fingers are ever running together over the uncoiling tape upon which the figures are being automatically printed, as they keep vigilant watch on the variations which occur in their favourite securities. The wiser ones among them, when they see a good profit on the price at which they bought, or, as the case may be, on the price at which they sold, promptly instruct the broker to go into the "House" and "close" the stock; or if they find that the stock has "run away" from them—that is, gone to such a point that they must count upon irrevocable loss, they decide to "cut" it lest their liability should grow serious. What the effect of this unwholesome mental agitation must be upon those whom it affects can best be conceived by the sort of disposition it engenders. In constructing public works, honestly promoting a sound company upon just conditions and with fair prospects of success, or in carrying on the ordinary business of a factory or a commercial undertaking, plans are laid beforehand, and by slow and cautious steps are brought to completion. In the evolution of these plans, accompanied with the effort to carry them out, the exertion throughout, even to the surmounting of unexpected difficulties, is only healthful and in every respect beneficial to the whole nature. But in Stock Exchange speculation the mind is tossed about in battledore-and-shuttlecock fashion, until it is first stupefied and then rendered morbidly irritable, the sport of chance, the faculties being at length benumbed, because denied the opportunity of calmly working out schemes and step by step

conducting them to a successful issue. As might be expected, the disease of softening of the brain is more prevalent among stockjobbers and stockbrokers than among the members of any other trade to be found in the British Empire.

There is one species of human *Tarantula* which spins its web in the vicinity of the Stock Exchange that is peculiarly dangerous. I allude to the sort of brokers who periodically "circularise" the public on the merits of sundry kinds of securities, at the same time giving prominence to certain announcements in their publications intended to proclaim them as immaculate, and inspire a proportionate amount of confidence in the gullible part of investors. "Speculative accounts never opened on any conditions." Readers of the urgent advice offered by the self-denying firm, to buy certain securities upon which their periodical communication dilates favourably, will find their statements so framed as to give the impression that they are too scrupulous to take more than a bare commission on the purchases of clients, notwithstanding that, not being actually members of the "House" themselves, they must halve the commission they receive from clients with some member of the "House," who alone can officially buy for them. For a time the *ruse* succeeds, but eventually gets "played out." The discovery, by-and-bye, comes to the slow perception of the trustful public that this eminently moral firm informs them when they should buy, but are not quite so prompt in warning them when they should sell. This is all the worse for the buyer, especially if he takes these outside brokers at their word and locks up the stock for investment. But to his bitter regret the fact is at length disclosed that he has been led to invest in a description of securities notably liable to wide fluctuations, and, consequently, most unsuitable for permanent investment. Closer inquiry makes him acquainted with the unwelcome fact that the immaculate firm



itself, despite its open repudiation of "speculative accounts," conducts its business exclusively on speculative principles. Its wily practice is to make large speculative purchases on its own account beforehand of the stocks it deems it expedient to advertise and praise in the circulars it sends out. In active times it reckons upon its oracular deliverances about the securities it takes under the wing of its unselfish patronage being eagerly studied and acted upon by its clients, nor, in some cases, do appeals from the "circularising" broker, for a time at least, lack influence to entice by his seductive bait the class who may be saving more money than they quite know how to employ profitably in their regular business. Perhaps they have once or twice followed the lead of this financial prophet with fortunate results. By degrees he is able, on the doctrine of averages, to judge with tolerable accuracy how much stock of divers kinds it is safe for him to "lay down," with the prospect of disposing of it to his constituency at a good profit. When orders come in, the securities are sold through "dummies," to throw innocent buyers off the scent, so that his own name only appears in the transactions as the "honest broker." But the period invariably arrives in a year or two when an unexpected financial storm blasts the cherished hopes alike of broker and clients, both being left to suffer the bitter consequences of their temerity.

Is there no remedy for the tumult of insolvency and distress which is being incessantly entailed upon brokers and operators by Stock Exchange speculation? It might be supposed that the banks and money-lenders would combine to avert oft-recurring catastrophes. On the contrary, however, it is the very facilities given to borrowers on securities, by which operators are lured on to perdition. So long as the stock markets exhibit an upward tendency, banking and discount houses engage in such keen com-

petition with each other that Stock Exchange loans "on margins" can be had to an almost unlimited extent. But the moment a sudden decline in prices is threatened, straitened borrowers are not only pressed to redeem their securities, which have been pledged with banks and money-lenders, but are peremptorily refused further assistance; the result often being that these securities are turned out by those holding them against loans, and sold at a loss. The means of the broker being thus exhausted, he is incapable of paying his "differences" to his creditors in the "House," and is mercilessly "hammered" in consequence. An official notice is forthwith sent by the Secretary of the Stock Exchange to the daily press that the defaulter has been expelled. In the absence of fraud being discovered in his accounts, he may be readmitted, but only on payment of not less than ten shillings in the pound. So far from this discipline having the slightest effect in checking the course of unbridled gambling, the core of the evil remains untouched. It is criminal for a commercial debtor who is insolvent to obtain goods within four months of his bankruptcy; but the Stock Exchange culprit, be he broker or client, is at perfect liberty to pursue his insane career without let or hindrance, so long as he can pawn his stocks or get credit from those who deal with him, and in this he often succeeds up to the day of his collapse, with impunity. Why should the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act be thus partial, being rigid against insolvent debtors outside the Stock Exchange, while it utterly ignores the reasons which undoubtedly exist for similar stringency in reference to cases of insolvency within the "House?"

It would go a good way towards rectifying the crying evils of the Stock Exchange system if brokers would insist under all circumstances upon a clear and fixed *minimum*

margin of 5 per cent. "cover" being in their hands against adverse movements in the securities in which their clients speculate. But owing to increasing competition for business among brokers, any such condition is rarely acted on, and the risks run by them in consequence are usually formidable. I have known cases in which outside operators, heavily in debt for "differences" with one broker, have at the same time clandestinely opened accounts without "cover" with several other firms to which they were introduced—buying and selling large blocks of securities in the most foolhardy and dishonest manner, with the full knowledge that if the bargains went against them the losses must be borne by the firms of whose indulgence they were wickedly taking advantage. The one effectual method of putting an end to these chicaneries is to enact laws making it criminal for persons to buy stocks they cannot pay for and to sell stocks they cannot deliver. Brokers who are known to give facilities for speculative transactions to impecunious clients, who are unable to furnish clear proof that they are in a position to meet their engagements, whether upon purchases or sales, should not only be deprived of the power of suing for the recovery of "differences," but should also be rendered liable for penalties.

Another melancholy feature of Stock Exchange life is the appalling extent to which *bonâ fide* investors have been robbed of money invested in certain classes of Foreign Government and Foreign and Colonial Railway securities.

Many hundreds of millions of British capital has been sunk in Foreign Government loans as completely as if it had been thrown into the depths of the ocean. The Stock Exchange cannot, of course, be held directly responsible for the bad faith of defaulting Governments. But, unquestionably, if opportunities had not been so freely furnished by that institution for the wanton manipulation of these

prodigious State debts the public would have shown far more hesitation about putting their money in them. When subscriptions to a large foreign loan are invited it is by the mechanism of the Stock Exchange that dealings in the bonds are pre-eminently stimulated and encouraged. Hence, but for the powerful influence thus exerted by brokers upon investors, such loans would not be so easily foisted upon the public. In raising money for the purpose indicated, the first thing done by the financial house in charge of the operation is to form a "syndicate," the members of which are induced to subscribe for certain amounts by the offer of a liberal premium. Each of these private subscribers is the centre of a wealthy *clientèle*, and in order that friends in their respective circles may be tempted to join, a share in the premium is offered them. Perhaps it is a 6 per cent. loan to be issued to the syndicate, 20 per cent. below par, and by them to be again offered to their following at 15 or 10 per cent. below par, while to the public it goes at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 5 per cent. below par.

When the prospectus appears those whose interest it is to make the issue a success send agents into the market to bid for the bonds until they are run up to a premium. Outsiders are beguiled by this artificial rise, but before the subscription list closes it is not improbable the market figure may have gone down below the issue value. By that time, however, if the strings have been skilfully pulled, most of the sum asked for may be subscribed, and a handsome commission on the whole transaction secured by the agents who have control of it. The dead robbery which has been committed, but never punished, in connection with the issue of foreign loans in England, transcends the belief of even the most experienced in industrial and commercial circles. I have known men in a very subordinate position before a certain notorious loan to one of the Central

American States was brought out, who immediately afterwards sported their carriage and pair and hunters, and expanded into proprietors of mansions, with fortunes of £100,000 at their backs. Yet these miscreants gathered only the fragments of the startling amount that was plundered by their financial superiors. The malversations practised in the disbursement of the Peruvian loan of £45,000,000, both in Europe and in Lima, were on a still vaster scale. A similar story, with modifications, might be told as to the bonded debts of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Equador, Honduras, Spain, Turkey, &c., many of which discredited States have not made an approach to an adequate recognition of its liabilities.

After an American Railway Company has fallen into bankruptcy through mal-administration, the disgrace and dishonour involved in the proceeding are salved over by a euphemism. We are politely informed that the company is to be "re-constructed." When several classes of bonds bearing different grades of interest are to be unified by being all brought down to the level of those bearing the lowest rate of interest, this open violation of the original contract with the various classes of bondholders is gracefully styled "consolidation."

If in the case of a shipping company the share capital should have been wiped out, and the vessels of the company have in consequence become the property of the debenture holders, the edge is taken off this fatality, in the eyes of the disconsolate shareholders, by the transaction being unceremoniously represented under the imposing term "re-organisation." However flagrant the breach of moral law that may have been perpetrated by responsible agents in any of these instances, no expression is allowed to be used in official communications relating to the winding up or reconstruction which could by any possibility be construed



as showing that any of the proceedings which had occurred were considered to have the slightest moral significance. Moral and religious phrases are kept as exceedingly appropriate for Sunday consumption, but if heard within "long range" of the Stock Exchange on week days they would be sneered at as cant. In fact, if the shameless frauds which are practised by some great London as well as many medium houses on an enormous scale, and allowed to pass undetected and unpunished, were only committed in proportions small enough to be intelligible to the common mind, the perpetrators, who now lavish gifts upon churches and charities, and live in the odour of genuine conservative sanctity, would be tried and condemned to forfeit personal liberty for twenty years.

In some regions of Stock Exchange society words mean so very little in the way of binding the speaker, that honest people often wish there could be some supplementary sign by which they could know what really they were to understand when vocal utterances are made. I remember making some such remark to a mining share dealer, whom I found to be the most unprincipled and heartless liar, and yet the most pious churchgoer, in the City. He simply treated my grave impeachment of share-dealing veracity as a good joke, and added that there was a class of men who had actually felt the want of some more trustworthy medium of communication than mere language! "Have you never heard," he said, "of the Jew who gave an order to a broker to buy stock for him? When it was found that the market had gone against the knowing purchaser he refused to pay his 'differences.' 'Didn't you see me,' said the ingenious Jew to his disconcerted broker, 'when I gave you the order, wink with mine eye? You should have known by that sign that I only intended to speculate for a profit, not for a loss!'" The narrator of this anecdote was himself the

most double-faced, treacherous, cold-blooded, and cruel intriguing trickster that ever bought or sold mining property. He could sing psalms, preach, and pray with the most fervent follower of Moody and Sankey, and yet, on occasions, drag even those he professed to esteem as his friends into snares by which many of them were almost ruined, while he never risked a farthing of his own in hard cash in any of the undertakings out of which he drew his commissions.

The Stock Exchange—like kindred gambling institutions in the United Kingdom, including racing, baccarat, &c.—is a typical instance of the English way of doing things. The law permits these and other fruitful sources of misery and fraud, while providing a vast array of judges, prosecuting counsel, police, and gaols to deal with those who yield to the strong temptations thus offered to the commission of crime. The law sanctions the machinery by which sufferers and transgressors are manufactured, at the same time employing costly institutions for further degrading, instead of elevating, morally and socially, those thus degraded.

## CHAPTER X.

## DOWNTRODDEN ENGLISH TOILERS.

WITHIN the last hundred years British commerce has made enormous strides, the value of exports alone being now about £300,000,000 a year, or more than a dozen times greater than a century ago. As the operative classes form about one-half the population of the United Kingdom, it is naturally to be expected that their condition would have shown material and intellectual improvement bearing a fair ratio to this vast accession to national wealth. The justice of this anticipation is based on the important fact that those in the country who toil with their hands pay a considerably larger share of taxes than is warranted either by their aggregate income or by the relation it bears to their expenditure.

Assuming the total gross taxable income of Great Britain and Ireland to be £300,000,000, the working class earn much less than one-half. Yet an examination of the amount of indirect taxes and the part of the burden borne by the same class proves that they are taxed to the extent of double their richer neighbours. A manual labourer with a wife and three children earns by hard toil 20s. per week. In his weekly outlay on necessities and comforts, such as tea, coffee, sugar, beer, tobacco, spirits, &c., the duties on which come under the head of indirect taxes, he has to contribute to the Treasury not less than 3s. weekly. If we reckon his three children as equal to one adult that would bring the sum to 1s. per adult expended in taxes to the Government. On the other hand, let us take

the Marquis of Bute with his £300,000 a year, and see how many adults he would have to provide for before the taxes of this kind paid by him would equal the onerous proportion paid by the working man. We are probably within the mark in putting his lordship's income at £6000 per week. Multiply this by three, and it will be found that in order to pay indirect taxes in proportion to his income at the same rate as the working man pays, the Marquis must have 18,000 adult consumers of taxable commodities at his expense within his household! The count is even more formidable against the Duke of Westminster, reputed to be the richest peer in England. Comment on the cruelly inequitable distribution of taxation as between rich and poor is therefore superfluous.

Could Mr. Ruskin have had in view this oppressive indirect taxation of the working man as compared with the relatively light taxation of noble lords and rich capitalists when he penned the following remonstrance? "Whereas it has long been known and declared that the poor have no right to the property of the rich, I wish it also to be known and declared that the rich have no right to the property of the poor."

"Twenty years of experience and frequent opportunities of studying foreign countries," said the late Mr. Scott Russell, "have deepened my conviction that while there is no finer breed of working men in the world than the British workman, there is no civilised country in which his interests are so little cared for, and in which the institutions, laws, and customs are so unfavourable to his material and to his moral development."

The Tory party in the House of Commons, in the Government, and in the country, backed by their allies, the Conservative peers, have deliberately fostered ill-disguised aversion to the masses of the people for centuries. What-

ever amelioration has been effected in their lot has been carried through in the face of opposition from those inveterate reactionaries, who have never been known to yield a single concession to justice and right until their resistance had well nigh brought the classes they had plundered and degraded to the brink of revolution and bloodshed. When the people clamoured for the extinction of rotten boroughs and an extension of the franchise to large unrepresented sections of the population, the Tories resorted to their favourite expedient of declaring that the excitement was manufactured by demagogues, and ought to be repressed by force. But so long as the multitude tried quietly and patiently, by Constitutional means, to obtain the political rights which had been denied them, the haughty "governing families" advanced the cowardly and insincere plea that there was an entire absence of enthusiasm on the subject of reform in the country, and that there was no clear evidence of its being wanted by the people. Much the same odious line of sophistry was pursued by the hereditary obstructives in respect to the last Reform Bill of Mr. Gladstone's administration, with this interesting and hope-inspiring difference, however, as compared with all previous legislative experience in the Upper House, that every bishop present, when the Bill was first thrown out by the Lords, voted for it, with the sole exception of the Bishop of Gloucester, who has in consequence become unenviably immortalised in history.

A brief review of the inhuman treatment to which English skilled labourers have been subjected in the past in the United Kingdom will enable us to appreciate the measure of success which has hitherto attended their life and death struggles to emancipate themselves from white slavery and to gain some sort of footing as rational beings, free citizens, representatives of the rights of labour, and



participants in electoral responsibilities. We Chinamen think that small populations like that of the United Kingdom have no excuse for allowing large political and social evils to remain unremedied. The inhabitants of China are twenty times as numerous as those of Great Britain and Ireland; and, except when famine comes—that we don't permit to hurt much—and when Chinamen become infected with laziness—to a large extent through the influence of English sailors loafing about the treaty ports—we have really no poor to speak of in the “Flowery Land.” Confucius taught us not to get rich by crushing down our neighbour—which is notably the practice in England—and that the only happy state is one in which the people are not very far removed from a common level of comfort, and where both commerce and agriculture are turned to the common benefit of all. Let Mr. Frederic Harrison state the case of England's social inequalities in his own graphic language: “Ten thousand miners toil and delve, giving their labour, risking their lives; ten masters give their direction or their capital, oftenest only the latter. And in a generation the capitalists are rioting in vast fortunes, while the ten thousand workmen are rotting in their graves or in a workhouse. And yet the ten thousand were as necessary to the work as the ten. Yet more. The ten capitalists are practically the lawmakers, the magistrates, the Government. The educators of youth, the priests of all creeds are their creatures. Practically they make and interpret the law—the law of the land, the law of opinion, and the law of God. They are masters of the whole social forces. A convenient faith has been invented for them by moralists and economists, the only faith which, in these days, they at all believe in—the faith that the good of mankind is somehow promoted by a persevering course of selfishness. Competition is, in fact, the whole duty of man; and

thus it comes that, in ten thousand ways, the whole social force is directed for the benefit of those who have. In this favoured land, while the owner of the soil knows no other toil or care but that of providing fresh modes of enjoyment; the peasant, out of whose sweat his luxury is wrung, lives like a beast of burden; whilst the merchant prince is courting society for a peerage, a thousand lives of seamen are lost, decoyed in rotten ships to sea; whilst mine owners can still paralyse the Legislature, a thousand lives are lost each year in pits chiefly, it is said, from preventable causes; and while fortunes are reared by ironmasters, a hundred thousand workmen are ground to the dust by truck." This is how the wealth of England is reckoned.

Lord Napier once said publicly in London, "The proportion of those who possess to those who possess nothing is probably smaller in some parts of England at this moment than it ever was in any settled communities, except in some of the republics of antiquity, where the business of mechanical industry was delegated to slaves." The late good-hearted Justice Byles, in contemplating the same startling inequalities existing in Great Britain, exclaimed, "The furies of want, misery, and despair, scourge the emigrants from our shores." Yet there are still to be found some working men in the country—despised and neglected though they have been by their superiors in rank—with so much of the ox about them that they cheered the Earl of Beaconsfield, when, as a brand-new lord, he visited Birmingham, the metropolis of Radicalism: the man who began public life as the arch-foe of hereditary privilege, and who, when the ladder of social promotion was well within his reach, turned his back ignominiously upon the principles and friends of his youth, and grovelled to the end of life afterwards obsequiously to Tory peers and their class prejudices against the sons of toil; the man who carried his betrayal of the people,

whose interests he had formerly espoused, to the length of refusing to allow a Dissenter from the Established Church to be buried in a parish churchyard, and who abused life in striving to the utmost to exclude the masses alike from political and educational rights, and in sneering at their appeals for social justice. The same limited circle of unworthy representatives of labour—happily fast diminishing in numbers and influence—still cheer the platform utterances of the present cross-eyed leaders in the movement of peers *versus* people. A large proportion of them, I am told, still worship the local ex-Radical, and now the turncoat ally of the Tories, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, and his political *entourage*. But the triumph of instructed Democracy in England, notwithstanding, is assured.

I can afford to speak thus plainly about hereditary titles and privileges, for we have nothing of the kind in China. In the Celestial Empire we are all free and equal; and nothing but talent and character will avail anyone there in aspiring to greatness.

For 200 years England held the monopoly of trade and navigation in certain of the markets of the world. We know that through this vast commerce the ruling and wealthy classes have prospered. But the inquiry returns: What has been the effect of the boasted Free Trade principles upon the masses? Have the toiling millions who have been the means of securing trade supremacy for their masters had a fair share of the results? Have they been better fed and clothed for it all? Have they lived in better houses? Have they had a better chance of good education? Some social improvement has taken place, unquestionably, in their condition, but it is disproportionate to their equitable demands, and any success in this respect which they have scored has been won by persistent struggles in the face of long and dogged opposition from avowed Tories and luke-

warm Liberals in the upper and middle classes. That cannot be a wise industrial policy which limits the rewards of skilled labour to the scanty supply of the necessities of life; which nurses vice and encourages ignorance; which narrows opportunities for enjoyment; which makes the industrial life of the country one long battle between employers and workmen, instead of a scene of harmony and peace. In clutching at the crown of universal trade, England has, still lately, neglected the higher glory of raising the scale of general knowledge and comfort among her sons and daughters. She has succeeded in the first object, but with the result, as has been already stated, of aggrandising the British master and leaving the British workman, in many instances, in the slough of degradation.

For more than 400 years, and down to the beginning of the present Christian century, statute law declared it positively to be a crime for workmen to seek higher wages. Only as far back as 1720 an Act was passed to keep down the wages of the tailors of London and Westminster. Any master who paid his men more than was allowed by the Act was liable to a fine of £5. Every workman who asked for more was imprisoned for two months. Down to 1824 it was a punishable offence against common and statute law for mechanics to form societies to endeavour to raise wages, even by pacific means. As recently as 1799 restrictions upon the liberty of masters to raise wages were still retained in the laws of the land. In 1762 the Court of Session in Edinburgh found that journeyman tailors and others in that city were not entitled to an hour for breakfast and that their wages ought not to exceed a shilling per day. If any of them should refuse to work on these terms when asked to do so by their masters, they were brought before a magistrate and punished. \*

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\* Escott's "England" contains many important facts on this and other aspects of the economic life of the country.

It was only in 1775 that an Act was passed to annul a previous arrangement long in existence, by which colliers, coal bearers, and salters, were doomed to life-long slavery. On entering a coal mine, the workers became bound to work there during the term of their natural life, and in the event of the pits being sold the rights to the services of these poor wretches passed to the purchasers without their even being consulted on the matter. The son of the collier could not follow any occupation but that of his father, and could only work in the mine to which he belonged by birth.\* Tramps and vagabonds not bad enough for hanging were consigned by the Scotch Lords Justiciary to perpetual service in these collieries and salteries. Every man thus disposed of had a collar riveted round his neck with the name of the master to whom he was given engraved on it. Anybody could recently see a collar of this kind in the Edinburgh Museum of Antiquities. The custom of celebrating the anniversary of the Emancipation of these Scotch serfs on the 23rd of May, I believe, has not yet died out.

In the pottery districts thirty or forty years ago, 11,000 children and young persons were hired out by ignorant and besotted parents in occupations notoriously fatal to their mental and bodily health. Some commenced work between the ages of six and seven, and others between seven and eight, eight and nine, and nine and ten. The hours of labour appointed for these cheerless and hopeless young slaves were from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. But in numberless instances they were required to grind on till 8, 9, and 10 p.m., in an atmosphere of 100 to 120 degrees, and in a few cases as high as 148 degrees, in rooms, or rather "stoves," about thirteen

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\* A full account of these worse than Siberian horrors is contained in the "Memorials of Lord Cockburn," the contemporary and biographer of Lord Jeffrey, of the High Court of Justiciary, Edinburgh.



feet square, and from eight to twelve feet high. In winter these pitiable objects were sent considerable distances on errands, with the mercury twenty degrees below freezing, without stockings, shoes, or jackets, the perspiration streaming from their foreheads. As might be expected, numbers died of consumption. Their employers were usually pillars of some local Sunday conventicle, who rejoiced in their consciences being "sprinkled with the blood of atonement." They rendered substantial help by their money and their prayers to the parsons, Episcopal and Methodist, to save souls, English and foreign, from an imaginary hell; at the same time never dreaming of moving hand or foot to remove this cruel system of sanctified murder. But, happily, by the persevering efforts of a few truly philanthropic M.P.'s, this scandalous condition of things has been changed.

In the paper trade violations of humanity, equally atrocious, used formerly to be met with, but have now disappeared. It was the custom for parents to carry their children seven years old on their backs through the snow, to work sixteen hours a day in paper mills. As if bent on immolating their innocent but brutally treated little ones by denying them, as much as possible, the frequent and prolonged relaxation which the nature of a growing child specially requires, these inhuman mothers knelt down at meal time to feed their offspring at the machine, that their operations might not be to any material extent interrupted.

Lord Brougham twitted Lord Shaftesbury (then Lord Ashley) and his Tory colleagues, who championed the Textile Factory Acts, with merely resenting, by their seemingly humane efforts, the overthrow of the corn laws, brought about by the Manchester school. "The landed men were ranged against the cotton and wool men. The repeal of the corn laws was supported chiefly by the cotton

men, and the spinners and millowners were constantly assailed by the landed aristocracy. The manufacturers having beaten the land on the corn question, the land said, 'We will retaliate a little on the subject of mills.' Why interfere specially on behalf of the manufacturing operatives? The people in other occupations—in agricultural labour, for instance—actually endure as much fatigue and misery as the factory operatives. The peasant grows old before his time, and scarcely ever reaches the natural term of human existence. Why, then, stop at cotton factories? Why not legislate for the peasant, for the brass filer, and thousands of others who are engaged in the endless variety of other unhealthy employments?" These trenchant words, if studied by posterity, will expose Lord Shaftesbury and his Tory *confrères* to the charge of having falsely appropriated to themselves credit for an elevated sentiment of humanity when their conduct did not really rise above the level of vindictive party zeal.

Indeed, the charge is incontestably proved by the fact that not only were general factory abuses throughout the country left unremedied by those pretended friends of the factory hands, but the agricultural labourers (whose crying grievances, had Lord Shaftesbury's reforming zeal been thoroughly unselfish, would have been the first to appeal to his philanthropic sympathies as a landlord), were left in utter neglect. And when any improvement did take place in the position of the labourer thirty years afterwards, it was due to no noble lord or land monopolist, but to the devoted leadership of Joseph Arch, and a few other obscure friends of this once ill-used and downtrodden candidate for poor law relief. However, although Lord Shaftesbury has been honoured in the work of redressing factory and workshop wrongs far beyond his deserts, we cannot be sufficiently grateful that, from whatsoever motive, an impulse was given

to the movement of raising working men and their families from the degraded position of passive automatic labour-machines to the consciousness of intellectual existence and rational aspirations. Factory legislation has the merit of killing off hosts of small manufacturing establishments which had long been hotbeds of suffering, disease, and inordinate labour to the working classes. One match factory, employing six men and fifteen boys, consisted of two small sheds, one of these measuring only 20ft. by 11ft. with no ventilation whatever. This served for a "dipping" and drying-room, as well as for heating sulphur and phosphorus composition. The other shed, also without ventilation, was 30ft. by 10ft. Here all the remaining processes of manufacture, numbering from ten to twenty, were carried out. Here children brought their meals and ate them. In London in 1869 there were thirty to forty match factories, and now there are probably less than half-a-dozen on a small scale.

In brickmaking from 20,000 to 30,000 children were employed between the ages of three and four and up to seventeen years. George Smith, of Coalville, has said of himself that at the age of nine he was continually employed in carrying about 40 lb. of clay on his head from the clay heap to the table on which the bricks were made. This work had to be performed almost without a break for thirteen hours daily. One night, after his day's work, he was compelled to carry 1200 gin. bricks from the maker to the floors on which they harden. The distance thus walked by the child was quite 14 miles, seven of which were travelled with 11 lb. weight of clay in his arms; and for this labour he received sixpence! It is only comparatively recently that brickyards have been brought under the Factory Acts. Until that was done factory inspectors had no power to enforce the Workshops Acts, and many proprietors.

purposely subjected themselves to the operation of that measure by keeping the number of their hands under 50. Now, fortunately, the employment of girls under sixteen is forbidden in all brickyards, and very few girls are occupied in brickmaking at all. But there are other abuses which the Factory Acts have as yet failed to root out.

In white lead manufacture, doubtless, illness and disease have been immensely reduced; reform in this direction being chiefly owing to casting the lead into frames to facilitate carbonisation by machinery instead of by hand, and the washing and brushing of the pots in which the lead is formed by machinery. But effectual means have yet to be devised to prevent the inhalation of the white lead dust by workers. Here incalculable mischief is caused by the absence of definite and universally enforced rules. In some establishments connected with this manufacture gloves and respirators, caps and dresses for women, and canvas boots and trousers for the men are provided; in other factories there is nothing of the sort. There are other industries, almost as dangerous, calling for the imposition of stringent sanitary regulations. Among the number may be included the silvering of looking glasses, the glazing of pottery, the grinding of cutlery ware, and the cutting and preparing of millstones. An authority in the latter trade writes:—"In a shop where millstones are prepared are to be seen men in every stage of suffering—the robust young man attracted by good wages, thinking probably he may be able to weather the storm; then he was robust, but is now pale and harassed by a cough; then through the various phases up to the shrunk invalid, whose frail body is actually wrenched by that cruel cough." A bystander says concerning the latter, "Oh! he won't last above two months." Parliament should insist on the universal use, in such instances, of gloves, respirators, clothes, caps, and boots.

The neglect shown in past British labour legislation to safeguard defenceless women from the inhumanity of heartless employers and of cruel husbands is far from honourable to the national character. The Government Sub-Inspector of the iron district of Staffordshire, Mr. Brewer, in a report on the nail and chain locality, issued some time ago, gives facts of a painful character : " I am continually asked whether I can do anything to stop women's labour, especially in and around Halesowen (where hundreds work making large nails and spikes), and where it is the order of the day, though the task is far fitter for men than for women. And these women work night and day, and toil and slave, for what? Not for the price that straightforward masters would give, but for any price any crafty knave of a master chooses to offer. These women work as long as they can get something to satisfy their half-starving families, while the ought-to-be bread-winner is luxuriating in some public-house at his ease. Day by day I am more and more convinced that this woman labour is the bane of the place. Nor do I confine this remark to the nail and chain trade alone. It was only the other day that a young woman, addressing me, said: ' I say, master, I wish you would make my man do a little more work and me less. I married a swell, I did, and ever since I've had to keep him by working in the brickyard, and not only keep him, but find him money to drink.'

" Nor is this state of things confined to the Black Country. At Broomsgrove I heard also of the growing custom of idle, lazy young lads looking out for skilled, industrious wives, in order to obtain an easy life. Things go smoothly for a time; but then come children, and perhaps sickness, and the idle hand of the legitimate bread-winner has lost its craft, or a course of drunkenness has so debilitated him that he can no longer stand the fatigue. While the mother toils and slaves the children are left uncared for, to wander shoeless and in



rags, till they are old enough to blow the bellows for their father at a miserable pittance per week—to be kicked and cuffed, hear filthy and indecent and blasphemous language, and are then sent to the shop, amid men degraded by drink and gambling, in time to follow the same course. Take again the instance of a collier's wife in the Black Country, who works at chain-making about ten hours a day, for which she is paid 8s. per week, though if she had taken her work to an honest master she might have had 12s. Out of this, before she can take any for herself, she has possibly to pay 2s. 6d. for nursing her baby while she works, 2s. a week for her 'breezes,' *i.e.*, firing for her nail-making, and 1s. for the use of her stall, leaving her half-a-crown for her subsistence."

And this the statement, not of a ranting demagogue or a philanthropist, who grows sleek and fat on his profession of humanity, but of a cultivated gentleman—a Government Inspector! Yet there is no champion of this cause of the degraded and ignorant and cruel, who makes it his own, struggling, at the risk of being put down as fanatical or crazy, in the House of Commons, that some effective parliamentary measures—violent, if necessary, in the first instance—may be based on these ever-recurring official reports, with a view to destroy for ever the hydra of brutality in England!

I have travelled all through the iron districts, and for weeks at a time have gone in and out among the work-people, and can vouch, from personal observation, for the truth of the following remarks, which have been published in a London paper called *Iron*: "The public have been frequently horrified by tales of the oppression and demoralisation of young women in the nailmaking districts, and now, thanks to the Nailmakers' Association, like revelations have been made in connection with another branch of iron-

work, of an evil which has been going on for a considerable period unnoticed till the local press brought it under the eye of the public. Visiting Cradley Heath (which I know well) in company with a deputation of the above-named association, the Special Commissioner of the *Wolverhampton Daily News* entered a smithy, where he found a graceful, fair-haired girl of fifteen summers turning out links of twisted dog-chain. The work, especially in summer, is laborious and continuous. There is no break, no intermission for a single moment. From the anvil to the bellows and back again, it goes on from morning till night, day after day. And the days are of eleven or twelve hours each, if not longer. The poor girl thus interviewed scarcely knew how long she had worked ; but she had eighteen chains to make before she finished that day. Neither had she any idea how much she had earned, for her mother took the money."

There is even worse than this behind. In the summer the temperature is such that both men and women strip to the waist. Many of these women are married, and the husbands of many of them are living in comparative idleness on the labour of their universally overworked wives. The commission and deputation visited an immense number of shops in Cradley and neighbouring villages, and found in all of them girls and woman working in the same unwomanly way. Some of the poor creatures were far advanced in pregnancy, and there is one pitiful sketch of a poor young woman who had but recently given birth to a child. "She looked pale and emaciated," says the writer, "but she was blowing her bellows and forging her links as well as her scanty strength would allow, while her baby, wrapped in some rags, lay on a heap of ashes in a corner." Thus these poor females toiled unceasingly at the forge twelve or thirteen hours a day for 6s. or 7s. a week.

Many of the men who are making money by grinding

these fellow-beings to a slow death, go to their churches and chapels, and if Moody and Sankey visit the neighbourhood these same unfeeling employers are found mouthing their hymns and prayers about "the love of Jesus" and "the bliss of Heaven." In the neighbouring town of Birmingham, where certainly much was done for the good of the masses before the alliance between the Liberal Unionists and the Tories, there are a few noisy "Liberals," as they are called, who delight to shout to excited thousands as if they would burst, about the wickedness of the Established Church, and the plots of the Tories to get the education of the country into the hands of the parsons, and so forth. All very well, no doubt. But can the claims of these movements be so urgent as the claims of the multitudes within a radius of twenty miles of them all round, worked to death, starved to death, drunk to death, or kicked to death? Why not let the vaunted "freedom of the subject" be suspended for a sufficient time, and sweep this abominable Augean stable, prudently but vigorously, till every vestige of the moral and physical stench be removed for ever? If such scenes of wretchedness be only enacted far enough off, in European Turkey or New Caledonia, and meetings were called to denounce and remedy them, the people would attend in tens of thousands; but because they occur at their own door, and are published daily in some shape in the newspapers, they lose the fascination of distant horrors, and the mind even of the philanthropist is apt to get hardened by its very familiarity with them.

The Factory Acts, so far as they go, have proved most beneficial in the case of women. One woman who had worked in a given calling, under the old and new *régime*, stated to a Government Inspector that she had not been ill since they came into operation. But past enactments require to be supplemented by a law prohibiting all married women

while their infants are dependent on them for strictly maternal nursing from engaging in factory labour. In such cases the State, when necessary, should see that the woman and her family—especially if she be the sole breadwinner of the household—should not suffer want by the enforcement of this restriction. The extent to which infant children left at home under the care of hireling nurses have been injured by the absence of mothers at the factory is appalling. The poor victims are often either grossly neglected, or fed on diet which can only have the effect of impoverishing the tissues, and paving the way to an early grave. If married women were forbidden to work, wasteful and indolent husbands, who now too often extend their weekly holidays from Saturday afternoon to Wednesday morning, and indulge their appetites to excess, would be compelled to work on Monday and Tuesday also, and then their babies would get motherly attention and sufficient nourishment.

Not a few other flagrant blots upon industrial England still await removal. A population of 22,000 men and as many women live from their birth until their death afloat in barges on canals and rivers, the Legislature having hardly condescended as yet to formulate laws against the lax and indecent mode of living to which they are inevitably doomed by the present conditions of their habitation. Out of 44,000 adults of both sexes, 26,000 cohabit in an unmarried state, and according to a factory report, out of a total of 72,000 children, 40,000 bear the stigma of illegitimacy. I am not unwilling to praise Mr. Chamberlain—his many faults notwithstanding—for his courage in defending the Employers' Liability Act, mutilated though it was, but the manner in which the old Tory rump, both in the Upper and Lower Houses, requited his services, ought to convince him that they remain, as ever, the natural enemies of the working classes.

I have shown that the spirit of the English laws has always been to check the efforts of the British labourer to better his condition, while enriching the merchants and manufacturers and strengthening the great lords in their monopoly of the land. England, in boasting her free-trade policy, has simply made a virtue of necessity. Her own people were starving, on account of the high price of flour, before 1846, owing to the fact that bad harvests and the protection given to the home farmers had raised the prices. Really she did not grow enough corn to supply her own wants, and this was entirely owing to the apathy and neglect of the landowning classes whose ancestors held the great bulk of the land without ever realising their responsibility in seeing that, at least, enough of it was brought under cultivation to provide sufficient food for the great body of the people. The country was obliged to import large quantities of bread stuffs, and the agricultural interest in England was not important enough to protect any longer. A revolution among the masses was pending from the scarcity and high price of bread, and to keep their property from being sacked the landlords reluctantly flung cheap bread to the people, like a bone to a dog. Her manufactures did not need protection, for no other nation could then lay down the same class of manufactured goods in England at the same price ; but it suited nicely for England to blow her trumpet all over the world, and say : " See, we charge no duty on the grain you send us ; there should be nothing but free-trade everywhere ; let our manufactures of iron and cotton into your countries free in like manner." But many of those nations said, " No, you English are only free-traders as far as it suits your convenience. You raise a revenue from tea, coffee, certain kinds of wine, tobacco, and other things supplied by other nations ; why should we not levy duties on some of the things that come from your shores,



and especially on those things that we think need encouragement for their manufacture in our own countries to employ our artizans?" But England says: "Very well, if you *will* persist in levying import duties on our articles, we won't give up the fight with your manufacturers of the same. We will cut down the wages of our working men to the lowest point, and then we can compete with the best of you on your own ground, in spite of your protective duties." And what is the fact?

Labour being the principal element in the cost of most of the commodities which Great Britain sells abroad, British working men have been systematically underpaid and degraded—until they wrung ameliorated conditions out of their employers—that the condition of *cheapness* in foreign markets might be secured. The working classes, if they were as intelligent and determined as they ought to be, would reply to their masters, "Hang your cheapness; we believe that we are just as entitled to good wages as you are to good profit; and if you can't get good profit except at the cost of giving us low wages, let us all take to some employment that will be a surer and more profitable source of living."\*

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\* Mr. Lloyd Jones fitly writes: "When we talk of 'foreign competition,' who is it that we compete with? When our traders go to Russia, Holland, France, China, Java, India, or elsewhere, do they find foreign manufacturers with the same kind of goods manufactured in foreign countries ready to compete with them for custom, or do they not rather find that the competition lies principally between themselves, and that a firm from one street in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Sheffield, or Birmingham competing against firms in the next street, or even in the same street, have a far stronger influence in bringing down prices and starving profits than foreign competition of any kind from any foreign country? These people fight each other in foreign markets as they do in home markets, and in their hunger to do business they overstock all markets; and then when a glut chokes up all the channels of supply, and so much manufacturing industry as is necessary moves slowly along, reduction of wages is the grand panacea upon which over-

But the worst of it is that in Britain, on account very largely of the wholesale robbery of land by the aristocracy in Charles II.'s time, it is manufacturing work or *nothing* for the masses. The farm labourers are near the starvation point, and if men won't work at low wages they must emigrate to countries where they can get a piece of land for a trifle, and rather than see the awful gulf there is fixed between Dives and Lazarus, and the labouring men made the slaves of the few employers, who batten in wealth on their toil, I should be willing to see them all leave in a body for some country where they can get enough to clothe, feed, and educate their families. But, unfortunately, they have not the means to emigrate; and the great Australian Colonies, now mainly dominated by ignorant demagogues and self-seeking political hirelings, do all they can to exclude this class of immigrants, who would, more than any other class, develop the vast latent wealth of their soil. Nor is any State effort made to settle the suitable and deserving portion of the surplus

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done speculators rely. The English artizan, who has nothing to do with this reckless speculation, and who has been unduly overworked while it lasted, is asked to lower his wages when the collapse comes, and patriotically starve while it continues; and if he does not meekly and submissively fall in with this, he is flouted and abused as a stupid and an ignorant trade unionist who knows nothing whatever of the sublime and infallible laws of supply and demand. Under what principle in law, in morality, in economy, in reason, or in nature, is England called upon to insist on doing the whole of the world's work? Why should we insist on manufacturing cotton, or wool, or iron for the whole earth? Or why only do we feel ourselves happy when we are called on to sweat every hour of our lives in doing this? We may be told that this has become a policy with us because there is a profit in it; and the answer will be satisfactory to whoever participates in the profit. But if the working man find that *he is not the participator*, that he must work every endurable hour, and for the smallest pay, is there any reason why he should quietly fall to and go through his drudgery with a contented mind?"

population on the productive lands of Rhodesia in Africa, which are simply left as the happy hunting-ground of capitalists, exploiters, and their imitators. It is a monstrous delusion keeping up the reputation of England for wealth, while the gains are not fairly distributed among the toiling millions. I say, again, that any social system which leaves the mass comparatively unprovided for, and pampers the favoured few, is a grim satire on religion and civilisation. The burning words of the wise and good judge, Byles, come to my recollection: "In the fierce struggle of universal competition those whom the climate enables, or misery forces, or slavery compels to live worst and produce cheapest, will necessarily beat out of the market and starve those whose wages are better. It is a struggle between the working classes of all nations, which shall descend first and nearest to the condition of the *brutes*." This statement has received painful illustration in the experience of the English working man. The Spitalfield silk-weaver spoke truly when he said to Mr. Mayhew: "We've driven the French out of the market in umbrellas and parasols, but the people are starving while they're a-driving of 'em out."

## CHAPTER XI.

## DOWNTRODDEN ENGLISH TOILERS.

*(Continued.)*

THE following striking testimony on the fallacy that Free Trade infallibly secures, in the long run an increased distribution of comfort among working-men compelled to toil under the system, is adduced by Mr. Robert P. Porter, member of the United States Tariff Commission, a statistician of eminence :—" I have this year made a careful comparison of the average earnings of labour in the important branches of industry in Great Britain, with the average earnings of the same classes of workers in the United States. In prosecuting this inquiry I have visited the industrial centres of European countries, and am prepared to further substantiate my conclusions with details if necessary. I find that in the United States wages are from 60 to 150 per cent. higher in the various industrial pursuits than they are in Europe. At the same time, the difference in the purchasing power of a dollar between Free Trade and Protection countries is absurdly exaggerated by the Cobden Clubites. In Germany and France, especially in the former country, the workmen can live far cheaper than in England. In the great iron and steel and coal centres, such as Essen, Dortmund, Bochum, Osnabruck, and half-a-score other places, for less than a shilling a week rent the labourer enjoys a good house and garden. The vilest hovels in South Wales, and in the Staffordshire mining districts, or Worcestershire nail regions, rent for 2s. 6d. a week, or about three times as much. The purchasing power of a dollar, so far as the wants of

the working man is concerned, when the cost and quality of the food is taken into consideration, is about the same in the United States as in England, though wages are often 100 per cent. higher in America."

If land were free in England, Scotland, and Ireland, so that a good part of the population now dependent on factories, foundries, and rolling-mills, could be supported by the soil which the aristocracy and squirearchy withhold from cultivation because it is required for their pleasure; and if Britain did not greedily aim to undersell other nations in their own markets, but were content to supply them only with those products which they do not themselves manufacture, it would not be necessary to beat down the wages of the working man. It is because the British working man is *compelled* to adopt "Hobson's choice," and become a factory or rolling-mill hand, or a collier, *in competition with all the world*, that he is so hardly dealt with. If the way were open for him to become a small farmer, as in France, Germany, America, China, &c., or if the owner of the factory, or the mill, or the colliery were not led to reduce wages to the lowest possible limit of human endurance, that he might undersell other nations in their own markets, the condition of the British working man would be one which all the world might envy, and England would be "merrie England" in reality to all her people. But if any stranger coming with fresh eyes upon the scene, as I have done (and whose brain is not sodden and stupefied by the daily sight of the working man's life, so that it takes no effect upon the accustomed observer), will take the trouble to visit the British counties I have visited, he can soon see for himself that England is not merry with the life of a contented, comfortable, and well-paid working people. It is, on the contrary, discordant, rebellious, sullen, imbruted, and miserably poor with the weight of oppression which it has heaped



upon those faithful servants of its unworthy ambition. It is a prison-den; a debtor's prison; a great charity work-house.

Just 100 years ago, John Howard, the great English philanthropist (who didn't try to make capital out of his profession of humanity) exposed the inhuman cruelties which distinguished the management of prisons in his day. But the fact is that the working men of Great Britain and their families in many parts of the country are in a condition almost as deplorable as the inmates of the English prisons in the time of Howard. In the chief industrial counties (which must be narrowly visited and watched for months and years, Sunday and Saturday, in order to see the naked reality) evidence is, alas, too patent of the existence of drunkenness, unchastity, Sabbath disorderliness, poaching, rank ignorance, small and crowded tenements, insufficient food, diseases incidental to lack of proper nourishment, and excessively filthy habits, in England, Scotland, and Wales—factory operatives, ironworkers, colliers, and agricultural labourers sharing alike in all these evils. Hovels with one or two rooms, and without such conveniences as are required by common decency, form a vast majority of the homes of the working classes of England and Wales. It is a common practice for the whole family to sleep in one small bedroom, with such results to health and morals as the imagination shrinks from contemplating.

All the while the iron, cotton, and coal lords, who extract wealth out of the brain, muscle, and sweat of these poor serfs, live in splendid mansions and "fare sumptuously every day." I shudder at what I have seen of the yawning abyss between employers and employed. Want of chastity is, on account of the physical and moral neglect to which the operatives are abandoned, the giant sin of Wales. Till culture and wealth bring with them a sense of responsibility

for the elevation of the masses, these qualities will prove a selfish curse instead of a kind blessing. Low morality and miserable habitations come originally from the low and inadequate rates of wages, from the want of systematic and of compulsory attention to education and morals being enforced, and also from the want in every breast of the cheerful hope of brighter days.

I once visited a town in Wales where nearly every family was in the employment of one man, an iron-master. The town reeked with dirt, there were no lamps or proper drainage, and not the slightest step was taken to promote the mental or moral welfare of the violent and neglected community. Neither lecture hall nor school had been established by those who employ the people or own the land, and the only step that had been taken for their benefit up to that period was the establishment of some goose clubs in connection with public houses, and a small *posse* of police to "run the people in" to the police station when they were helplessly drunk and disorderly. By a comparatively late census, more than 28,000 houses in Glasgow were found to consist of but a single apartment, and above 32,000 of but two, so that of the whole 82,000 families comprising the city, upwards of 60,000 were housed in dwellings of one or two apartments each.

Professor Thorold Rogers gives it as his opinion that the cost of living in country districts has doubled within the last thirty years, and that some articles of food, once within the reach of all, are now practically unattainable by country people. Sir Edward Sullivan has said of the operatives of the manufacturing districts :—"They are *not* prosperous, and it's mockery to tell them to thank God for a full stomach when it is empty. They are *not* well off ; never has starvation, pauperism, crime, discontent, been so plentiful in the manufacturing districts."

As far back as the fourteenth century, when the wealthy folks knew little but agriculture, they took every means to bind the labourers to work for them at starvation wages on the soil, and passed laws to keep the sons of agricultural labourers from learning trades. In the time of George I. an Act was passed (cap. 27) to prevent working men going to a foreign land to earn better wages. The law says that, "Such as entice or seduce working people to go and settle abroad shall be fined £100, and be imprisoned three months, and for the second offence shall be fined at discretion and imprisoned a twelvemonth, and the artificers so going into foreign countries and not returning in six months after warning given them by the British Ambassador where they reside, shall be deemed aliens and forfeit all their land and goods, and shall be incapable of receiving any legacy or gift."

Under George II., Statute 23, matters are worse. "The seducers incur, for the first offence, a forfeiture of £500 for each artificer contracted with to be sent abroad, and imprisonment for twelve months," and for the second £1000, and are liable to two years' imprisonment.

Under George III., Statute 14, cap. 71, no better. "If any person exports any tools or utensils used in silk, linen, cotton or woollen manufactures (excepting wool cards to North America), he forfeits the same and £200, and the captain of the ship (having knowledge thereof) £100; and if any captain of a king's ship or officer of the Customs knowingly suffers such exportation, he forfeits £100 and his employment, and is for ever made incapable of bearing any public office; and every person collecting such tools or utensils, in order to export the same shall, on conviction at the assizes, forfeit such tools and £200."

Such was "merry England" "when George III. was king! As late as 1782, the enticer of any workman employed in

printing calicoes to go beyond the sea, was fined £500 and imprisoned twelve months. Not till 1825 were the statutes prohibiting skilled workmen from emigrating repealed, and flax machinery dared not be exported, even in 1842. In 1750, before the North American Colonies declared their independence, a hatter's shop in Massachusetts was declared a nuisance by the British Parliament, because it kept a few head covers from being made in England. An Act was passed in 1750 forbidding the building, in many of the American colonies, of any mill for rolling or slitting iron, or any engine, forge, or furnace, under penalty of £200, and every such erection, by the same Act, "was deemed a common nuisance to be abated by the Governor." To discourage the importation of cheap cotton manufactures from India suited for the poor, an Act was passed in 1720 that any person found wearing a printed calico without the payment of £5 for the privilege, would be fined, and the seller must forfeit £20. Again, for the benefit of the woollen interest (the shivering limbs of the poor in winter was too trifling to be thought of) another Act was passed laying on an excise duty of "three pence for every yard in length, reckoning yard-wide, of mixed prints made in Great Britain." Protective duties were imposed on almost every article of food and clothing, down to buttons, at the rate of from 20 to 75 per cent.; so that the manufacturers might be enriched. The million had to pay for all out of their empty purses.

Through this very religious attention to the interests of the rich, and the fashionable contempt shown for the hungry poor, what was allowed to happen in Ireland, "the Isle of Saints," ruled by a sovereign who was head of the Reformed Church of England, and, as one might suppose, overflowing consequently with what the priests sweetly call and little-practise, "The love of God?" The population of Ireland,

which was 8,199,153 in 1841, was allowed to dwindle down *through famine* and forced emigration, to 5,402,759 in 1871. Famine and emigration in a land capable of supporting 20,000,000! This, too, under the sceptre of the United Kingdom where one Archbishop, a true follower of the divinely appointed fishermen, gets £15,000 a year! After this, no wonder there are such "triumphs of the English Gospel in China and India!"

India? Yes, before England took her in hand she had a vast and flourishing cotton manufacturing industry of her own for thousands of years. But it wants special and irresistible grace to understand the gospel way of England, which has tried to make everything in heaven above and earth beneath subservient to the elect aristocracy and wealthy men, who are the special objects of the "New Testament covenant." In 1700 the British Government, doubtless after earnest prayer by the chaplain of the House of Commons, prohibited the importation of Indian cotton goods into the British Islands, because they would harm the domestic woollen manufacture. By-and-bye cotton manufacture was quite domesticated in England, till, by the help of labour-saving machinery and a reduction in 1815 of the Indian duties, Manchester cottons were (of course) allowed free entrance into India, and almost annihilated the native manufacture. But what on earth did it matter if some scores of millions of poor Hindoos were ruined, as long as the devout end was gained, and "the redeemed of the Lord" saved by "the atoning blood," clutched the spoil? Truly, why "should not the end sanctify the means?" Mr. Carey, in his letters to the *Times*, since published separately, utters these weighty words: "The cotton manufacture of India was transferred from India to Great Britain by prohibiting the export, not only of machinery itself, but of all the artisans by whom machines might possibly be



made. To this we added the imposition of heavy duties on the import of Indian cottons, coupled with a prohibition of duties of any kind on English cottons imported into India." A pagan like myself would have argued thus:—"If Great Britain had been truly philanthropic, her rulers would have assisted the people of India to improve their mechanical methods." But the crushing-out process was more *English*—some might wickedly say in the Catholic sense, more *Christian*. After facts like these, can we wonder that a great historian like Buckle should leave the following sad words on record:—"I have had occasion to read many thousand letters written by diplomatists and politicians, and I have hardly ever found an instance of one of them who understood the spirit and tendency of the age in which he lived."

India is not far from China, and the one great country suggests to the mind the other greater still. What right has this Sabbath-keeping and missionary-sending England to force the use of Indian grown opium upon China against our will, our supplications and our remonstrances, Government and people? The unconverted Christless rulers of China were faithfully striving to save the Chinese people from the terrible vice of opium-eating and opium-smoking, which has injured our nation sadly. The rulers of Great Britain declared war with China in 1840 to compel the opening of her ports to this evil drug, and in 1842 this "opium war" ended by a treaty which granted the demand of Britain, as we could hold out no longer. The priest at the holy desk was praying "Give peace in our time, O Lord," and in ten minutes afterwards prayed the peace-giving God to enable the army and navy to "scatter thy enemies," an unoffending people, who only wanted to keep the morals of their sons and daughters pure, but at the same time the ships of war were knocking down our forts and

deliberately obliging us to spread in our nation a drug that breeds disease, weakness and early death. Later wars have been waged to confirm the same philanthropic privilege. But I must come back to the state of the working classes.

The industrial policy of a nation should be judged by whether it makes the great bulk of the people contented, happy, educated, and moral. Show me the nation where a great part of it is not in that state, and I will show you a nation that has a bad social and industrial system. If, then, the working and farm-labourer classes of England are neglected, as a whole, in stomach, mind, conscience, and family life, there must be something very wrong in the system by which they have been allowed to grow up as they are. I shall not be blinded to this fact by the sight of the rich banks in Lombard-street, the large cotton mills in Lancashire and woollen mills in Yorkshire, the great ironworks in Glasgow, Cleveland, Barrow, and Staffordshire; white-wigged flunkeys, gorgeous carriages, and richly furnished palaces at the West End of London, and the reports every week in the *Illustrated London News* of men and women dying worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. Up till lately, at any rate, the words of the late Mr. Joseph Kay, of the Cambridge University, on this subject were true: "The poor of England are more depressed, more pauperised, more numerous in comparison to other classes, more irreligious, and very much worse educated than the poor of any other European nation, solely excepting Russia, Turkey, South Italy, Portugal, and Spain. In England and Wales more than half the poor cannot read or write."

What is worse, if the people are getting into a better state, it has been in spite of the squires and parsons and the

other magnates of the country. Every privilege they have obtained so far has been wrung from the upper classes in and out of Parliament, whose one study has been to keep them ignorant and ill-provided for, as if it were dangerous to raise them. If all Englishmen have not gone over the case of the working people, I, a stranger, have done so, to see for myself if the eternal bluster about the religion and morality of this country be really true, and if England is so much more glorious than China. The boasting is all delusion.

The brutality which is so marked a feature in the social life of large numbers of colliers and other British labourers, is the direct result of the influences I have mentioned before—inadequate wages, no hope of ever owning a house of any kind, and a want of proper training of mind and morals. Not even amongst the North American Indians do we find examples of greater inhumanity than are to be met with in the columns of English newspapers. In the “Black Country” the spirit of brutality among the operative classes shows itself with melancholy regularity, and chooses for its principal victims old men, women, and children. Knocking down with savage ferocity, biting, stoning, and kicking to death are the special forms of “man’s inhumanity to man,” which find favour in this nucleus of coalpits, iron mines, potteries, and cotton mills. An inoffensive bystander wishing to put an end to a quarrel at Hanley, Staffordshire, gets a large piece bitten out of his ear; a quiet citizen of Liverpool gets knocked down and kicked to death; a scoundrel at Dunkinfield puts on his clogs and dances in them on a woman’s head; in one day three husbands are charged with kicking their wives to death with clogs at Salford; the police in many towns have been stoned, stabbed, and kicked; and at St. Helens six ruffianly colliers set upon an old man of eighty and his wife, kicking the poor old woman, and having

knocked out one of the old man's eyes, filled it with lime, and thrust it also into his mouth. Even children of the tenderest years do not escape, as is seen by a full-grown man kicking and jumping on a little boy of six years at Preston. These customs seem so established that it is found necessary to invent new terms to describe them. Kicking to death with clogs is now known, in the *patois* of those lively districts, as "running punce," and kicking in the mouth, so as to knock the teeth down their owner's throat, is called by the playful name of "purring," as if it were nothing more than the amusement of an innocent kitten. These are facts, every one of which I have on most trustworthy testimony.

Men and women of England! There was once a grand burst of indignation against the "Bulgarian atrocities," and it proves that there is a vast fountain of humane feeling in the hearts of multitudes of Britons—all to your credit. But, for Heaven's sake, don't be always turning the *thick* end of the telescope to other nations when you look at their faults, while you turn only the *thin* end of the glass upon the sins of your own country. Don't waste so many hundreds of thousands of pounds on trying to convert the Africans, the Hindoos, the Chinese, and the Jews. Not one of these nations has such horrors to record in their newspapers as perpetrated by them. When my quiet and sober countrymen have read these things they have had serious thoughts of sending missionaries to the slums of London, and the many moral wastes of Staffordshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire. Keep some compassion and pious zeal for the blackguard population in your own country. Great crowds gathered together a few years back, and swayed to and fro with maddened rage at the savages employed by the Turks to torture, outrage, and kill mothers and babies. These fiendish deeds were done in the hot

blood of war, and by mountain tribes more ferocious than lions and tigers. But the horrid crimes chronicled in your daily newspapers, of which I have given a very few examples, are committed in a country of very boastful religious and moral pretensions, not in the storm of a bloody revolution, but in private families, in the streets, and in the public-houses. Why don't your members of Parliament, and lords, and mayors, and justices of the peace call public meetings about them, and agitate till, by severe civil measures, by Acts of Parliament, and, above all, by compulsory education, the foul blot shall be wiped from your escutcheon? Drive the Bashi-Bazouks, and Circassians, and Dahomeyans out of England.

Dogs in the Black Country are often treated with far more tender consideration than the poor, dirty, hungry, shoeless, and ragged children of the pitmen. A correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, writing from a village near Sheffield, relates the case of two shoeless, starving little girls, who had to go without meat in order to gratify the vile tastes of their father and that a dog of the retriever breed might have a good dinner. If the story in the same paper of a disgusting prize fight between "Brummy," the dwarf, and the bull-dog "Physic" was incorrect—and it has never been properly disproved—one who has narrowly scanned the sort of life in that region could find instances to match this.

When I had finished my inquiries into the persistent oppression and gruesome cruelty inflicted by the upper classes of England for many centuries on the patient agricultural labourer, it seemed to me almost miraculous that his breed was not as extinct as that of the Dodo. History shows the people of England to have been mad on the Land Question as far back as Saxon times. Among these progenitors of the English it was only the possession of



land which conferred a legal right to existence. They regarded a landless man as belonging to nobody. He was treated as an outlaw whom anybody might kill at discretion. But his life was probably quite as safe as a roving vagabond, as it would have been had he been "the man of his lord." He was liable, on any whimsical pretext, to be sold, tortured, or hung by his half-savage owner, without any right of appeal or redress. Outside the manor-house were the revolting appliances of his master's arbitrary authority—the gallows for hanging men, and the pit for drowning women, which were used, freely or sparingly, according to the passing mood of the despot, and without fear of censure on his part from State Government or public opinion. The agricultural labourers of those days lived in dark cottages of wattles daubed with mud, and their meals consisted of salt meat half the year, with onions, cabbages, and nettles. In 1313 A.D., the Earl of Leicester spent on his household £7309, less a trifle given in charity. This considerable amount, in an age when money went farther than it does now, equals the wages of 1825 labourers, the daily wages of a thatcher at that date being only  $3\frac{1}{4}$ d. per day.

In 1349 the Black Death swept away about half the population and that terrible visitation doubled the wages of farm hands at a bound. The Leicesters and other noble vultures took alarm at what they termed the "malice" and "singular covitise of servants," and gave the rein to their vindictiveness in a series of legislative enactments of incredible barbarity.

By the Statutes of Labourers (1349, 1350, and 1360) they condemned the helpless and long-suffering labourer to work for the wages prevailing before the time of the pestilence, under atrocious penalties of imprisonment and branding. All combination among agricultural toilers was strictly forbidden. If a man fled from one county to another a

writ for his recovery was sent to every sheriff in England. If he was taken, the letter F was burnt into his forehead "for falsity." The labourers were sworn twice a year to observe these unbearable regulations. Any child brought up to agricultural pursuits till twelve years of age must adhere to them for life. Should Nature have endowed a labourer's son with intellectual gifts qualifying him for service as a teacher or a priest, the doors of the school and church were barred against him. After the rising led by John Ball and Wat Tyler—martyrs to the grossest inhumanity and injustice from the upper classes—penalties were greatly increased.

The Tudors and the middle class rose to power together, but so far from the lot of the ill-used peasant being improved, he sank to a lower and lower depth of suffering and degradation. The extensive lands held by the Church in trust for the poor were ruthlessly plundered by that blood-thirsty monster, Henry VIII., and his rapacious fellow-conspirators, and were knocked down to the highest bidders, regardless of the bitter distress of the evicted peasant tenants who had no recourse but beggary and robbery. The sole response to supplicants for justice and mercy was the halter. The labourers were eaten up by the gallows. Henry alone sent 72,000 of them to death, literally decimating the population. His daughter Elizabeth "was content with a modest holocaust of 300 or 400 'vagabonds' per annum." But this fearful blood-letting left the evil uncured. The "Reformation," which kindled the enthusiasm of the English Puritans and the Scotch Presbyterians, was, economically, an unmitigated curse to the English agricultural labourer.

According to Richard Heath in his thrilling volume "The English Peasant:"—"By the 1st Edward VI. c. 3, men and women able to work and who lived idly for three days, were to be branded with a red-hot iron on the breast with the

letter V, and to be slaves for two years to the informer. The master was to feed his slave with bread and water, with small drink, and such refuse meat as he thought proper, and to cause his slave to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise, in any work or labour, however vile it might be. If the slave ran away from his master for the space of fourteen days he was to be his slave for life, and to be branded on the forehead or cheek with the letter S; if he ran away a second time he was to suffer the pains of death as a felon. The master could put a ring of iron on the neck, arm, or leg of his slave; he could sell, bequeath, or let out his slave after the like sort or manner he might do with any other of his moveable goods or chattels. Any attempt to maim or wound such masters or mistresses, either during or after the time of slavery, or any conspiracy to burn their houses or corn, was to be deemed felony, unless some person would take such offender as a slave for ever." There was still, however, enough spirit left in the downtrodden labourer to attempt resistance, and revolts against the wanton and unprovoked cruelty he endured were led by the brothers Ket, of Norwich, and others. Indeed, so brave and powerful were the Norfolk insurgents that they could only be put down by German and Italian mercenaries.

Coming down to within sixty years of the date at which I write, Lord Suffield then frankly said that it was perfectly natural for an English agricultural labourer to be a poacher. His wages then were only from 9d. to 1s. a day, while an expert gang of poachers had been known to bag three sacks of game in a night. Under the diminished severity of the Game Law *régime*, introduced in the first year of William IV., there were between 1833 and 1846 fifty inquests on gamekeepers found dead, twenty-nine of the cases being returned as wilful murder. In the years 1844-46 there were 11,392 convictions for offences against the Game

Laws in England and Wales. What, then, must have been the amount of crime under the old cruel *régime*, with its starvation wages to agricultural labourers and shameless inhumanity which lasted from 400 to 500 years ! When we consider how practically familiar the British "masses" were with the gallows and the block in those "good old times," it cannot be thought surprising that so many Englishmen should be cruel now to one another in "glove fights," in drunken brawls, in wife-beating, in outrages upon children and animals. There were 168 offences for which hanging was the penalty, and it was rare to pass Newgate or Tyburn any week day morning without witnessing a host of wretched British subjects sent from the gallows, the block, or the pyre to their long home. Of the total number of capital offences named no fewer than four-fifths were put on the Statute Book in the reigns of the first three Georges. "The gentlemen of England" (whose aristocratic descendants are now so faithfully served by the ex-Radicals, Messrs. Joseph Chamberlain and Jesse Collings) in the days of which I write, who were responsible for these savage enactments, included some of the most disgusting brutes and ruffians that ever held the lives of hapless social inferiors at their mercy. It was no wonder that "the gentlemen of England" were much scared by the French Revolution a century ago, especially Mr. Pitt. An English writer remarks : "He knew that the English peasant had quite as good cause for revolt as had Jaques Bonhomme ; but truth to tell 'our old nobility' had done their work of oppression and degradation much more effectually than the French *noblesse*. The English peasant was so cowed and brutalised that hardly a thought of insurrection entered his darkened soul. The 'gentlemen of England' spent £625,000,000 which they had never earned in order to overthrow the French Revolution, and spilt, to boot, the blood of English labourers like

water in the unhallowed achievement." Even after the warning signalled to the English landed aristocracy by that momentous and far-reaching event, the "gentlemen of England" continued to give the English agricultural labourers wages so miserable that without parish relief, which the landowners worked in their own interest, at the expense of the community—the labourers could not have been kept alive. Seven, eight, nine, or ten shillings a week, when the quartern loaf averaged eighteen pence simply meant wholesale murder by the owners of broad acres. In Northamptonshire the magistrates fixed the parish allowance at 5s. a single man, 6s. a man and wife, and 2s. each child—whatever the family earned to be deducted from the allowance!

When the French war was over, and landlords thought they could once more breathe freely, they subjected the unhappy labourers to treatment which was nothing short of infamous. Again the cup of poor Hodge's grievances was full to the brim. Made desperate by the unmerited wrongs he endured, he rose in many districts in the year 1830, burning ricks and smashing machinery, as the only way open to him to vent his justifiable resentment. The "classes" were alarmed, but without the faintest sign of repentance for the heartless cruelty they had unceasingly perpetrated on the starving human beasts of burden who worked on their lands. Truculent judges on the bench, infected with bitter aristocratic prejudice against the labourers, mercilessly imprisoned, banished, and hanged multitudes of them without finding the least excuse for their violence in the diabolical persecution they had suffered at the hands of the "gentlemen of England." Nor could the *Times*, in its issues of December 27th, 1830, repress the righteous indignation it felt against the bloody outrages committed upon wretched labourers, with which the robes



of peers and judges were sullied. "We do affirm," said that journal, "that the actions of this pitiable class of men are a commentary on the treatment experienced by them at the hands of the upper and middle classes; the gentlemen, clergy, who ought to teach and instruct them, and the farmers, who ought to pay and feed them, are disgraceful to the British name. The present population *must* be provided for in body and spirit on more liberal principles, or the whole mass of labourers will start into legions of banditti—*banditti less criminal than those who have made them so—than those who by a just but fearful retribution will soon become their victims.*" About three years later a Parliamentary Commission reported that "the condition of the rural labourers in too many districts was brutal and wretched; their children during the day were struggling with the pigs for food, and at night were huddled down on damp straw under a roof of rotten thatch."

The "blue blood" of the great landlords of England instantly starts into their faces when they hear of working men agitating against enormous "perpetual pensions" which some of the former have for generations wrung from the bone and sinew of labour on account of certain real or supposed services rendered to weak or despotic monarchs by ancestors in the semi-barbarous past. If their right to transmit to eldest sons real family property, from age to age, be called in question, if anyone should advocate that all the cultivatable and pastoral land of the country ought to revert, as it formerly did, to the trusteeship of the State, and be rented off to tenants of the crown, who will make the best use of it for the public good, subject to fair compensation to deprived hereditary owners, a wailing outcry is heard from luxurious peers and the landed gentry of "confiscation," "robbery," and so forth. But has there ever been equal solicitude on the part of the

landlords of "noble" and "gentle" blood to disgorge their ill-gotten landed legacies from ancestral robbers, who themselves in many cases were only tenants of the Crown, who, nevertheless, induced their respective sovereigns to make them freeholders without paying for the land, who in addition fenced in "commons" belonging by law to the poor, and who afterwards reposed securely on the accepted principle of every burglar, "possession is nine points of the law"? When rents have been raised by land monopolists to their farming tenants, when farm labourers have been ground down to semi-pauperism by the starvation wages paid them, has corresponding zeal been displayed by the "upper ten" to secure justice to the oppressed toilers of the land?

Again, I am tired of hearing the English people boast of the great prosperity of their country. There's its vast wealth. Yes, but how many get the benefit of it? How can ever a poor man in this so-called prosperous country get hold of a bit of land for himself? 12,000 persons own 30 out of the 37 million acres in England and Wales. About twenty big Dukes or Lords own the half of all Scotland. Seventeen persons in England and Wales own more than 50,000 acres each, and three of these own more than 100,000 acres each. There is a Duke whose estate has 186,397 acres; and he receives a rental from it of £176,044. There are thirty-two landlords whose rent-rolls are more, in the case of each of them, than £50,000 a year; and of these twelve get over £100,000. The Duke of Norfolk has £264,564 a year from land! This is how the wealth and greatness of England is reckoned. One man, because his father happened to have a title and an estate, sticking to both to all eternity, heaps up his enormous money where nobody but his own family can touch it; while millions are living on the brink of starvation, not once or twice in their lives, but every day as it comes. If these

great nobles, who are the nodding plumes on the helmet of England, and who draw off the notice of the world from the rags and dirt and want that gather about her feet, would just keep some of the great love they are always talking about being in their hearts to "God the Father and God the Son" for those poor tattered and hungry brethren and sisters near their doors, and use their united influence in raising them a little nearer to the comfort they enjoy themselves, their religion would be more rational and consistent. The agricultural labourers, who are close to plenty of wheat, meat, potatoes, and milk, ought to have all they want easily in this great country.

But no, the "prosperity" of England is not after that fashion. If there be only a larger amount of cash than there is in any other country, even if it should only be in fifty hands, the wealth and grandeur of England is said to be astounding. But while champagne and turtle soup, hounds, hunters, beasts, and plants from all parts adorn the great palaces, the poor labourer in Dorsetshire has to content himself with vegetables flavoured with bacon fat, or bread and cheese; in Somersetshire with brown bread dipped in cider; in Cheshire with potatoes or gruel thickened with treacle; and in the winter time, when work is scarce, even this wretched supply fails, and he is obliged to fall back on the parish for help. Why, considering how little is done by the rich and the titled to strike a blow at this curse of life-long distress I should be ashamed to be known as belonging to the landed gentry and the aristocracy, if I had been so descended.

The 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 agricultural labourers whom the Americans call "English serfs," up to a few years since, had no rights which their social superiors felt obliged to respect. They could not generally elect members to Parliament, for they paid too small a rent to have a county vote.

Bound to the soil, underpaid and underfed for the most part, they began their career in a hovel and closed it in a poorhouse. In the United Kingdom there are nearly a million who are paupers, and another million hovering on the border line of pauperism—one-twentieth of the people living on charity ! Yeomen, on their own snug little properties, used to be the chief cultivators of the land in England and Wales. With no outgoing for rent, and none for wages, this sturdy and ruddy race was the most independent of mankind. This pride and glory of the English nation is now almost extinct. The system of land tenure that has prevailed for centuries has had the effect of enabling the rich lord to crush out the small proprietor. In the United States, in the greater part of Western Europe and in China, persons of small means can become proprietors of homesteads and small farms ; but it is impossible for a peasant, except in rare instances, to buy a piece of land in England, for the value is beyond him.

Why should the right of the lordly legislator to his estates and title in perpetuity be more sacred than the right of the poor man to his tools, furniture, and wages, in perpetuity ? A mortgagee of household goods can sell them to recoup himself, but the law of primogeniture forbids the present entailed owner of land to sell it, absolutely, to pay his lawful debts. No original inventor—be the advantages of his brain products ever so great—can secure an interest in these beyond fourteen years.

But the land is of immensely greater importance to the sustenance of the whole population than the best book that ever was written, and the most useful invention ever patented. Yet a few nobles and squires claim that their title to the land they have inherited, and to whatever improvements their tenants may have made upon it at their own expense, is sacred, perpetual, and inalienable.

It is this outrageous dogma of the "divine right" of British nobles to territorial monopoly; to eject stalwart cottars in favour of sheep, to supplant sheep by deer, to neglect their responsibilities as to the most productive cultivation of the soil, and to keep their labourers in ignorance and want, which has disorganised every department of the labour market for three centuries, contributed mainly to the congestion of the town populations, and forced the pestiferous workhouse system into its present gigantic dimensions. Thanks to the Agricultural Labourers' Union, under the leadership of Joseph Arch, for any mitigation which has taken place of late years in the condition of the labourer—first crushed to the dust by his social superiors, and then by a natural transition, hated by them.

But for trades unions also, established for regulating the sale of labour in the various branches of skilled industry, who can tell to what deeper abyss the heartless tyranny of capital and the unscrupulous despotism of oligarchical monopolists would have condemned the artizan! "The produce of labour" says Mill, "is redistributed at the present time in an almost inverse ratio to the labour supplied; the greatest return falls to the lot of those who never work; after them, to those whose work is only nominal, and thus, in a descending scale wages are reduced in proportion as the labour becomes more onerous and more disagreeable, until at last, that which is the most fatiguing and pernicious to the body, can scarcely secure with certainty the acquisition of the immediate necessities of existence." The direct outcome of this iniquitous system of primogeniture and entail on the one hand and of industrial competition on the other is the ghastly array of paupers, combined with those on the border-line of pauperism.

At length, however, the day is dawning for the English Agricultural labourers. In the face of stern Tory opposi-



tion they have obtained the franchise. The Democratic mandate has gone forth that they shall henceforth administer their own affairs in their Parish Councils, though the squire may squirm, and the parson be ever so disgusted.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE MANUFACTURE OF ENGLISH PAUPERS.

WE have beggars in China, but no institution resembling that of pauperism. The degrading Poor Law system of England, by which the deserving poor are often left to starve, while lazy vagabonds who make a mere profession of destitution, or who prefer drink to work, are cared for, is happily unknown in the great Empire to which I have the honour to belong. Want, in the case of able-bodied Chinamen, is rare, because their habits are abstemious and thrifty, their mode of living simple, and their diet, while sufficient for their physical support, is inexpensive, being mostly of a vegetarian character. Among the begging fraternity of China—who are always kindly dealt with by native shopkeepers and householders, if their case is seen to be genuine—by far the larger number are mendicants, either because they are under the monastic vows of Buddhism, or because they trade on the fact of their being halt, maimed, blind, or leprous. Only a small proportion includes persons who beg from wilfully indolent or intemperate habits. Heaven be thanked! We are spared the ghastly spectacle to which English eyes have been accustomed for hundreds of years—a system of public and, to some extent, of private charity, by which millions of the comparatively small population of England are demoralised, lost to self-respect, turned into cringing sneaks, confirmed loafers, snivelling hypocrites—idle, shiftless, filthy, skulking, lying dependents. The countless

“doles” and other annual gifts, left to so-called “poor” of England, by well-meaning, priest-ridden, pious ancestors, as a means of “saving their souls,” have degenerated in too many instances into baits, to tempt worthless impostors and their families to take up their abode in the districts in which these abused religious and charitable endowments are founded, and to intrigue in order to secure unjust advantages from them.

In common with the misguided parish workhouse *régime* and its wholesale manufacture of pauperism, this false philanthropy has done more to crush high-mindedness in its too willing victims than centuries of compulsory Board School education can effectually overcome. The transition is both easy and natural from pauperism to crime. The former is the foster-parent of the latter; and the prevalence of both in England is due, though by no means exclusively, to the demoralising conditions under which charitable relief is too often administered. The British tramp has been encouraged in his roving, stealthy, and aimless life by parish alms. The habitual tippler, among the “lower orders,” very generally spends his closing years upon the rates. The workhouse, with its system of outdoor and indoor relief, supported by the ratepayers, has become a standing refuge for effete workmen, whom capitalist employers have drained the spirit out of by hard work and by wages so low as to be barely equal to keeping together the bodies and souls of themselves and their families. The same institution, so destructive of true manhood and womanhood, has been heartlessly made use of by county landlords and their farm-tenants, as a final resort for their miserably remunerated and worn-out labourers to close their days in, at the expense of the parish. How weighty are the words of Admiral Maxse, R.N., in his “Causes of the Social Revolt”:—“When we examine this matter honestly and without class bigotry and

conceit, we discover that our boasted prosperity is logically based upon a deliberate calculation of a fixed and extensive element of human misery and helplessness ; and that without the fulfilment of this essential condition of its being, society, as at present constituted, must dissolve."

But despite the provision liberally made for the destitute, it is estimated that there are, every year, over 100 deaths from starvation in London alone—the wealthiest capital in the world. If that number were drowned in a single accident, what a sensation would be caused ! Out of a population of 38,000,000 in the United Kingdom, 750,000 are found on the melancholy roll of paupers, in the receipt of workhouse relief on the 1st of January in each year, and it is stated by competent authorities that an equal number is mainly dependent on the same source for subsistence, while a third proportion, not smaller than either of the two proportions just enumerated, is always found hovering on the boundary line of pauperism. The cost of this pernicious system of parish relief in London alone is close upon £7,000,000 a year. What a commentary on the social disorganisation and social disparity under which England—the great stronghold of foreign missionary societies—struggles !

The causes of this overwhelming but preventible wreckage call for somewhat detailed notice. If we begin with rural districts, it will be found that not a few landowners in Scotland, as well as in England, have swept away the cottages formerly set apart for their labourers, and driven these peasants into overcrowded villages. In these they are compelled, by the miserable pittance they earn, to rent wretched hovels too small for the decent accommodation of themselves and their families. They are crowded like rabbits in a warren, and modesty in sexual relations soon takes its departure. If, in the state of hunger which their

insufficient wages prevent them from even moderately appeasing, they are found by the squire's gamekeeper trapping a hare or shooting a pheasant, they are sent for trial before magistrates belonging to the very class which has denied them an adequate supply of the bare necessities of life in return for their labour; and their wives and families are left to pine in want, while vindictive punishment is meted out to them in a long gaol sentence, by the landed gentry who have largely helped to make them what they are through the agency of the nefarious social system which prevails in the rural parishes of England. "Hodge," forced by the squire to work for starvation wages, is impelled, for the purpose of allaying the pangs of hunger, to appropriate game which a shamelessly partial law preserves to the sole use of the occupant of the mansion.

When the ill-fed, underpaid cottager, has suffered the penalty of what the law ironically calls theft, in this instance (the representative of land monopoly and inhumanly selfish luxury being the real criminal) he returns to the society of the village an outcast, and flees to some populous town where he may bury himself in the crowd. Here he can receive no quarter from the Union authorities, as his claim to assistance is confined to his own parish; yet from this he has been driven by a criminal act for which a selfish local squirearchy is mainly responsible. It would, indeed, be miraculous, if, under such circumstances, the man being consciously manufactured into a pauper, did not in his bitterness against feelingless social superiors, become an habitual criminal. He first sinks through inadequate means of subsistence, and he is kicked for falling by the class that starved him. This is an illustration of that strange anomaly in human nature, which shows men and women to be most pitiless towards those whom they have injured. For once in its long career of subserviency to Upper Class



interests, the *Times* spoke the truth about the gross injustice shown in the treatment of downtrodden English serfs by their haughty and heartless superiors, when on October 19th, 1864, it said :—"The English live under squires, territorial potentates, extensive employers, and local oligarchs, and under this *régime* they endure an amount of positive tyranny or negative neglect that they would not find surpassed under the most despotic system of the Continent." Even Tennyson, though in far closer affinity, by nature, with the pompous rich than with the humble poor, in a moment of true inspiration wrote :—

"'Tis'n them as 'as munny as breaks into 'ouses an' steäls,  
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meals,  
Noä, but it's them as niver knows wheer a meäl's to be 'ad,  
Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad."

Reckless marriages, with the improvidence which usually accompanies them, must be credited with a large share of British pauperism. This was the view taken by J. Stuart Mill, who said, "Poverty only exists—in such industrious countries as this—because mankind follow their instincts of reproduction without due consideration." A reference to the birth-rate of the London sanitary districts confirms Mr. Mill's judgment in a convincing manner. In a table of vital statistics of these districts for the first quarter of 1893, we have distinct evidence of the less restrained breeding power of the poor as compared with that of those living in a higher grade of comfort. The wealthy districts of Kensington, St. George's, Hanover Square, St. James', Westminster, and Hampstead, with a collective population of 340,000 inhabitants, had in the three months specified 1816 births. On the other hand, in the poor districts of Shoreditch, Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, and St. George's-in-the-East, with a collective population of 372,000, there were in the same period 3855 births. Here it is demon-

strated that very nearly twice as many children are born in the poor districts per 1000 inhabitants as in metropolitan districts which are rich. Hampstead has a birth-rate of 19·9 per 1000, while the birth-rate in Whitechapel is 44·8 per 1000. But excessive as the size of families is among the poor of England in proportion to their means, their case in this respect is materially improved since 1877—the year of the celebrated Bradlaugh-Besant trial for publishing an American book on the population question.

To make matters worse—especially in the metropolis—some parishes are crowded with paupers, and were until lately overwhelmed with poor rates which they were unable to bear—and can with great difficulty bear even now—just in proportion as they were burdened with pauperism, while rich parishes, able to contribute liberally to the rates without feeling the burden, were rated lightly. The Bill of Mr. Fowler for equalising London poor rates, however, should have the effect of mitigating this glaring and long-standing injustice.

Pauperism tends to increase from the indiscriminating treatment of applicants for poor-law relief when they appear before Boards of Guardians. Enough time is not allowed for proper inquiry into each case. Hence imposture passes too often undetected, while applicants, unaccustomed to dependence on charity, feel so keenly the position into which they have been forced by want, that the very genuine character of their shyness and sensitiveness is apt to be misinterpreted by the rough-minded men sitting in judgment on them as if based on misrepresentation. The time usually occupied in disposing of applications for relief by guardians is at the rate of eleven cases in four minutes, or nearly three cases per minute. If a system were specially invented for the express purpose of fostering charlatanism at the public expense, involving the yearly waste of millions sterling, it

could not possibly prove more effective. It is this laxity in dispensing public as well as private charity which has led to the formation of charity organisation societies, which, however, are prone to err as much in austerity as the institutions whose administrations they seek to improve err in leniency and indifference.

Another cause of British pauperism consists of the facilities given by English law—which is often perverse and contradictory—to mothers of illegitimate children to obtain support from men with whom they cohabit, compared with the difficulties experienced by respectable married women, whose children are legitimate, in getting support from cruel husbands. Under the law as it stands, a faithful wife can only extort support from a reluctant husband who neglects or deserts her, by applying to the guardians for relief. As there are so large a number of women so circumstanced in “Christian England,” it is obvious that multitudes are compelled to come upon the rates who would otherwise be glad to look to sources less humiliating for aid in times of need. But as if the law were meant to give direct encouragement to concubinage, it happens that if a man keeps a mistress she could compel him to give her from 2s. 6d. to 5s. per week for every illegitimate child, although the only way in which a virtuous wife can coerce an unwilling husband to avert starvation from herself and her children is through application, *in forma pauperis*, to the workhouse authorities. A man living illegally with a deceased wife’s sister, can be compelled by the strong arm of the law, without the intervention of the guardians being invoked, to afford sustenance and shelter to his partner in illegality and her children, while the children of the woman’s deceased sister have no such recourse. If the union between the man and his deceased wife’s sister could be made legal, the children of the living wife would at once be in as bad a plight as those

of the dead one. If British citizens cannot be made decent, honest, and law-abiding by Act of Parliament, it is only too plain that there is at least distinct provision made for a section of them becoming paupers by Act of Parliament.

Orphanhood is a fruitful cause of English pauperism, and it is distressing for a "heathen" like myself to contemplate that there should exist throughout the whole of the United Kingdom an institution, under the name of a "workhouse," which dooms helpless orphans, through no fault of their own, to the lowest social abyss, in which hopeless degradation is worked in mind and character, and in which the pauper spirit becomes hereditary. An English lady some time ago adopted a workhouse child eighteen months old, and it was completely ignorant of the most familiar European mark of affection known among children and adults of both sexes. In China we never have practised kissing. So it would be no sign of barbarism there for a child of the age mentioned to be unacquainted with that act. But for an English child, even so young, not to know how to kiss, betrays, not unnaturally in the eyes of English people, a truly savage condition. Passing from the workhouse to the workhouse school, the orphan inmates of refined parents are obliged to mingle with the depraved children of depraved parents. When the former are ill, they must share sick wards with the refuse of the population and the worst of characters. The atmosphere of workhouse schools is hopelessly pauperising, but when there is added the fact that these establishments contain children of thieves, tramps, and of women of ill fame, they can only be regarded as moral Pandemoniums.

A workhouse matron once said: "Of 300 orphan children who have left the house, I do not believe one is doing well." Abandoned pauper women have been known

in workhouses to strip to the waist and dance madly, shouting accompaniments of obscenest songs. A workhouse master says: "These were the children of paupers, and brought up themselves in the workhouse." Of 165 girls apprenticed from a certain workhouse, only 18 have done well, and within three years 73 returned to the workhouse as the only home ever known to them. In another case, "out of 165 young paupers provided with clothes to enable them to get employment, 58 found their way back to the workhouse in 2½ months." "Out of 180 who went out into the world from Cork workhouse, 60 returned soon." The history of 80 prostitutes which could be traced, showed them for the most part to have been children of the same institution. An officer of a Lancashire workhouse school remarks: "The number of girls who fell after leaving is painful to think of." Some asylums for the rescue of fallen women positively object to receive any who have been brought up in a workhouse, as such cases were mostly found to be utterly incorrigible. When we Chinamen calmly think of an arrangement existing in England, for hundreds of years, having the palpable effect of demoralising a very large portion of its population, it cannot be wondered at that Buddhists have sometimes considered whether it was not their duty to send missionaries to convert this benighted country from the error of its ways. Except prison, no place can possibly be worse for infants and half-grown children. A lady, on a certain occasion, hired a girl of 13 from one of these pauper refuges. Soon she ran away, exclaiming "Oh! I couldn't stay, ma'am. They scorned me so." "Who scorned you so?" asked the lady. "The children of the town," she replied; and from that time she began to droop, and died of a broken heart!

For a number of years past the unfavourable results of the workhouse system for children has led to the develop-



ment of a plan for boarding out workhouse children, which has been attended with highly satisfactory results. Out of 923 children placed under the care of foster-parents in Glasgow, only forty were lost sight of, and less than 5 per cent. of the remainder turned out badly. Results equally satisfactory can be traced all over the kingdom where the system has been tried.

Inadequate help to the deserving poor or alms perfunctorily given by sympathetic individuals and charitable institutions without proper investigation paralyses the spirit of honest independence, and infallibly swells the ranks of pauperism. There is infinitely more money devoted yearly to the cause of charity in England than is necessary to place all the destitute who have to provide for themselves alone, or for their families in addition, if only the amount was dispensed with care and reasonable economy. But not a few kind-hearted people give, under a mere blind benevolent impulse, which has been suddenly aroused by some effectively told sham tale of woe. They selfishly take the quickest way open to them of escaping any further discomfort inflicted on them by the story of the applicant by dropping a coin into his hand, without the smallest regard to the case being investigated and proved to be genuine, or to the sum given being sufficient not only to allay present distress, but to set the supposed subject of it, with his household, permanently on their feet. So with many of the "Dorcas" and "Benevolent Societies" connected with the legion of religious bodies in England. It is evident from the comparative trifles contributed to them by all classes in Christian congregations, Catholic and Protestant, that they have become, for the most part, nominal tests of affected self-sacrifice for the good of others in Church members. The tacit understanding in the congregation is that if no subscription is made to these charitable funds, even by those

who are able to contribute, the omission will not be deemed fatal to a safe profession of religion, although one's name in the charity list is useful in keeping up one's reputation for combined devoutness and philanthropy.

The doling out of these funds to those believed to be in need of them is too often entrusted to members—usually ladies—of the congregation, who welcome the opportunity thus afforded of airing their self-importance and patronage towards their social inferiors. But it is extremely rare that alleged cases of destitution are dealt with by the organisations referred to so thoroughly that the reality of these cases is placed beyond all doubt, and that the help given is so adequate as to supersede the necessity of rendering any further assistance. It would be a blessing for the social welfare of England if a miracle should level such ecclesiastical barriers to industry and thrift, since by their heedless pottering they operate largely as premiums on hollow pretence and indolence. A city missionary states that two ladies used to visit, in a quiet way, a depraved family in a densely populated court, and always made a point of relieving them. Prior to the settlement of this family in the court, the occupiers were fairly sober and industrious. But observing how much better the *protégés* of these two Ladies Bountiful fared by practising deception as to their needs, they became discontented, and immediately began to attract the notice of these unintentional patronesses of sham want to themselves. As they found that filth and rags in the case of their envied neighbours were stepping-stones to relief, the whole court combined to reject Christian ministrations which were unaccompanied with alms, and soon became a nest of squalid vice and drunken pauperism, under the influence of misdirected charity. This is but a typical instance out of thousands that might be quoted. The charity bestowed, whether out of pity or ostentation,

into the hand of the chance applicant for relief, is often an encouragement to debauchery and pauperism, and creates one half of the misery it seeks to relieve, but cannot relieve one half of the misery it creates.

Who, then, are the proper recipients of charitable relief? All who, from no fault of their own, sink into a helpless state. Orphans or deserted children; men or women rendered destitute by illness or accident; artisans out of work, compelled to part with their all for bread; men and women who have lost their character, and with it the employment by which they earned a living. Such aid as will place them in a position to rise again, and as will enable them to retrieve their honour, that is, in some respects, the most divine charity of all. But if the voluntary relief given be indiscriminate, we have, sooner or later, a repetition of the mendicant orgies which usually result from the lax administration of charity. In New York some years ago a large number of soup kitchens and free lodgings were provided in the fashion I have just condemned. This reckless benevolence attracted the professional beggars of the whole State. The streets of the city swarmed with them. Ladies were robbed by impostors on their own doorsteps. Labourers in the receipt of good wages, impelled by their low and dependent natures, forsook work in the hope of being henceforth supported in idleness; domestics left houses where work was required of them and applied for quarters in free lodging-houses, in which they were supplied with free meals, being at the same time left at liberty to roam in the streets at night. The result, as might be expected, was that many of them were ruined.

Not long since at Darlington a rogues' holiday took place under similar conditions. Large processions of claimants of charity marched through the streets, and charitable citizens with the guardians were literally besieged by the

mob's importunity. The advice of the Local Government Board in London was asked. The reply returned was :—"None must starve, apply the workhouse test." The test, accordingly, was applied, and the seeming cloud of distress in Darlington was quickly dispelled. The 1500 or 2000 persons who were said to be starving suddenly vanished, nobody knew where or how. Darlington successfully met the crisis by forcing the idle to work, and their pretence collapsed like a pricked bubble. Had New York adopted the same course, and assisted the really distressed to emigrate where work was plentiful, true charity would have been exercised. The unwise plan followed only had the effect of destroying the self-respect of thousands, and enticing them to degradation. The German township of Elberfeld furnishes a striking example of the success of the sifting process which has been mentioned. By that plan the number of local paupers was reduced in twelve years from 4800 to 1800, though during that period the population increased from 50,000 to 60,000, and great commercial depression existed. One neighbourhood was infested with beggars. The next district was a nest of impostors. A charitable relief committee was established (1) to repress vagrancy by the strict enforcement of the Vagrancy Laws, (2) to investigate thoroughly each application for relief, and (3) to bestow adequate relief wherever cases were proved to be deserving. The officers appointed by the relief committee put themselves in communication with the police, the poor law authorities, and all charitable societies in the neighbourhood. The result was magical. In twelve months the streets were freed from beggars, and impostors fled. Yet the action of the committee was liberal. During a severe frost of eight weeks £18 to £25 a week was distributed. Every case was exhaustively known. Within a fortnight from the break-up of the frost, only 5s. a week was required to be given away in relief.

Not the least prolific cause of British pauperism is intemperance, which is one of the most notorious plague spots of English life. That vice, again, is largely due to the filth, want, neglect, and insensibility to intellectual influences in which the masses have been allowed to wallow for many centuries; their condition, in these respects, only quite recently having begun to undergo amelioration. To realise how deeply the British physical constitution is saturated with alcohol from past national habits, it is necessary to glance at the history of the enthralling power of intoxicating liquors over the English which has lasted for many centuries. The Saxon King Edgar decreed that there should not be more than one alehouse in a parish. The first parliamentary enactment relating to the control of drink shops was passed in 1504 in the reign of Henry VII. It empowers justices to close any house for selling ale in towns, and to take securities for the good behaviour of all innkeepers. Up to the beginning of the 18th century A.D., ale was of low alcoholic strength. Until 1688, the British appetite for drink seems to have been fairly moderate. Only 527,500 gallons of spirits were distilled annually for the supply of a population of 5,700,000, while the quantity of beer brewed was 6,000,000 barrels. But in 1689 an Act was passed which opened the flood gates of evil and misery from which the country has not yet recovered. In that year the importation of foreign spirits was prohibited, and the trade of distilling was opened up to all English subjects on payment of a trifling duty. This laid the foundation of brutal drinking habits, which in thirty-five years acquired the force and prevalence of a violent epidemic.

Lecky—"History of England in the 18th Century"—tells us that liquor was sold at the corner of every street, and boards were hung out announcing that customers could be made drunk for a penny, dead drunk for twopence, and



could have "straw for nothing." So destructive had the drink demon become to the manhood and womanhood of England, that on 20th February, 1736, the Justices of Middlesex petitioned the House of Commons, affirming that drink had ruined thousands, rendered multitudes incapable of labour ; that, in great part, poverty, murders, and robberies in London might be traced to this cause, and that if the disaster was not checked the kingdom would be ruined. The majority were wedded to their degrading habits ; and an attempt to enforce an act for reducing and regulating the gin traffic caused riots ; so overpowering had the taste for strong drink become, and the illicit sale of spirits apparently could not be stopped. It was found needful to pass another Bill to mitigate the evil in 1737, but the effect of the new measure was inappreciable. A dozen years afterwards, no less than 17,000 unlicensed houses flourished within the radius of the metropolitan bills of mortality. An eminent Bishop of the Anglican Church about this time wrote, " There is no safety of living in town or country ; robbery and murders are frequent. Our people have become what they never were before, cruel and inhuman. These accursed spirituous liquors have changed their very nature." New and more rigorous measures were passed which, in thirty years, reduced the consumption of spirits to 2,000,000 gallons. But, down to thirty years ago, licences were granted according to magisterial discretion or free trade principles, without reference to the wish of the inhabitants. Even now the number of public houses is altogether disproportionate to the wants of the people. The Gladstone Ministry (1893) brought in a Veto Bill authorising the number of licensed houses in any district to be decided by a local plebiscite, but the public house interest was too strong for the desired reform to be carried.

More than sixty years ago, that distinguished philan-

thropist, Lord Brougham, was strangely but unconsciously induced with a view to the diminution of drunkenness to "do evil that good might come." As a means of weaning intemperate Englishmen from drinking spirits he passed a law for the establishment of beershops. Unhappily, no precaution was taken that the beer allowed to be drunk on the premises should be comparatively unintoxicating, and the result has been disastrous, adding fuel to the flame of the drunkard's appetite instead of quenching it. Worse still, a large number of beershops afterwards obtained licences for the sale of spirits, and the beer sold to customers, as a rule, had been of great alcoholic strength. This mischief is exceedingly aggravated by Excise regulations. It is estimated that the amount of duty charged is only 1s. 6d. to 1s. 8d. per gallon on alcohol contained in beer, against 10s. per gallon on that contained in spirits. An eminent statistician has stated that 75 per cent. of the alcohol consumed in the United Kingdom is used in the form of beer. Recently 180,000 persons in one year were proceeded against in England and Wales. Of these 10,000 were habitual drunkards. Yet the number prosecuted form a small proportion of the whole, for a man must be "incapable" as well as drunk, before he is liable to apprehension by the police.

Judges, governors of gaols, chaplains, clergymen, and superintendents of asylums, are unanimous in the belief that the great bulk of pauperism comes from intemperance, as also 20 per cent. of insanity, according to eminent doctors, and 60 per cent., according to the late Lord Shaftesbury. Reckoning that for every single drunken man arrested two escape, we have considerably over half a million habitual drunkards in England and Wales alone. Assuming that not more than two-thirds are heads of families, and that each head represents a family of five, we have 2,000,000

men, women, and children who are members of drunkards' families. Out of 780,000 persons classed as paupers, between 500,000 and 600,000 are made so through intemperance. Out of 71,000 lunatics in England and Wales, 14,000 are insane from the same cause. It is one of the countless inconsistencies of English law that the State enacts prohibitory laws against absolute illiteracy, vending explosives, the publication and sale of indecent books, the discharge of fire-arms in public places, and even against the establishment of betting and gambling houses. Why should not the liquor traffic of the United Kingdom, which is admittedly fraught with public danger, be placed under much stricter regulation in the interests of public morality and happiness? One thing is proved beyond the possibility of doubt—the number of drunkards in each locality is determined by the number of places devoted to the sale of intoxicating liquors, especially those licensed to sell ardent spirits.

It will, indeed, be an enormous material, as well as moral benefit to England, Scotland, and Ireland, if Mr. Fowler's Bill should become law, and tend to bring the number of liquor houses into fairer proportion to the requirements of the nation. With all the ingenuity of missionary detractors of China, they are able to bring no such accusations of habitual drunkenness against the Chinese as are brought by the English against themselves. My countrymen are essentially a sober and quiet people. Even the use of opium—the soother of ruffled minds among the poor of my country—which may here and there be carried to excess, is not a drug indigenous to China, but has been forced upon my countrymen at the point of the bayonet, and with the aid of naval guns, by the English nation, who wanted to compel us to buy this noxious product of British India for the enrichment of British vendors, even at the cost of

Chinese demoralisation. The Government at Peking protested against the introduction of opium into the Imperial Dominions, as likely to be followed by moral havoc among Chinese subjects. All the redress we got was, first cannon balls, then continuous and increasing shipments of opium, accompanied with the peculiar English antidote of poisonous whisky, bibles, prayer-books, and missionaries, ignorant of the Chinese language, and of the old and philosophical religions they had come to combat.

But the only practical solution I can see of the drink problem in England is that which has so effectually suppressed drunkenness in Sweden. In the latter country formerly the annual production of spirits was 26,000,000 gallons, with the result of causing unparalleled degradation among the inhabitants. Laing, the traveller in Scandinavia, says: "No other 3,000,000 of beings in Europe appeared to commit within a given time so large a number of crimes and moral transgressions." The material condition of the country was correspondingly bad. Thriftlessness and reckless poverty were conspicuous everywhere. More than half a century ago the Swedish Diet passed a licence reform Act enabling parochial and municipal authorities, subject to confirmation by the Governor of the province, to fix the number of retail shops and public-houses. The result was to reduce the number of distilleries from 44,000 in 1850 to 457 in 1862, and the production of spirits to no less than one-fourth. After an experience of a quarter of a century a trustworthy writer states that "the tone of thrift, honesty, and contentment is everywhere apparent, and the very garments of the poorer classes show self-respect, and there is an utter absence of drunken persons." Improvement has steadily continued down to the present time. Gothenberg, the second city of Sweden, with 60,000 inhabitants, was long the most drunken city in the world. In 1855 appre-

hensions for drunkenness amounted to one in ten of the population, and in a published report of the city's condition it was said that "probably in no community were brutish coarseness and deep poverty so common." In the same year the greatest part of the licences were purchased by the representatives of the municipality, who first reduced the number of bars, and then placed the remainder in charge of persons who, it was intended, should derive no benefit from the sale of intoxicating drinks. Drinking establishments were made comfortable, and not only dealt in intoxicants, but also in the supply of food and non-intoxicating drinks. From the sale of the two articles last named, the person in charge derived considerable profit. He had, consequently, every motive to encourage the sale of them, while it was in no sense his interest to promote the sale of intoxicants. Class legislation on the subject was eschewed. Customers could get drink without being tempted to drink too much. All profit of the sale of intoxicating liquors belongs to the town. Rates have fallen to a very marked extent under the new arrangement. Reform would have been more rapid had the licences of 400 beershops, music saloons, and grocers' licences been acquired at the same time. The town, however, has prospered wonderfully under the regulative system. Artisans and labourers are better paid. In twenty years the streets were completely cleared from drunken persons; the behaviour of the people was proper; the houses of the working classes were well kept; there was no poverty visible. Some reformers, ignoring the physiological diagnosis of intemperance, look for a remedy to higher education; but such an expectation has ever been, and ever will be, doomed to disappointment. Education, so called, was as common among unskilled as among skilled labourers in Sweden prior to the adoption of summary measures for the regulation of the liquor traffic, when the



people were degraded, despite their possession of educational advantages. There may be good houses, parks, an ample water supply, innocent recreation, strict police, better administration of the poor laws ; improvidence, too, especially when due to intemperance, may be stamped as a crime. Yet all these inducements to the culture of social and domestic virtue may easily be neutralised by 140,000 publicans and beer sellers.

As I have remarked in another chapter, the darkest aspect of the drink question in England is that it claims among its victims a large and increasing number of women—the mothers of future generations of British—who must in consequence be the bearers of a deteriorated progeny. In Liverpool in a single year 10,000 women, against 12,000 men, have been arrested for drunkenness. The proportion is not much smaller in other great British and Irish centres. The amount of cruelty—maiming of children and wounding of innocent infants in the drunken fury of parents—divorce cases, and the numberless accidents directly traceable to intemperance in the weaker sex it is impossible fully to estimate. Above all, the bearing of this agency on the production of pauperism must be at once self-evident.

There is only one other active cause of British pauperism that I will cite, and I shall do no more here than allude to it, as I shall have occasion to enter fully into a subject which is germane to it in another chapter. I refer to the compulsory alienation of the yeomen and peasants of England from the soil, when these small agricultural tenants of the Crown had the land, which they were careful to cultivate, taken from them by corrupt sovereigns, who paid it over to their hireling retainers as the price of unscrupulous service rendered to the King or his dynasty ; the new occupants keeping it more for ornamental and speculative purposes than for agriculture, horticulture, grazing, or timber-growing. This

cruel divorce of the peasant proprietors of England from the soil has probably been more potent in producing pauperism than all other causes put together. By it a vast number of the people were cut off, gradually, from the employment to which they and their forefathers had been accustomed for centuries. As their living failed in the country they were impelled by dire necessity to seek for the means of support for themselves and their families in the towns, which had already become burdened with population, in most cases beyond their capacity to furnish sufficient wage-earning employment for the inhabitants. The only alternative left for the new comers, unless indeed they were willing to commit suicide, was to live by crime or by charity. Is it surprising that highway robbery should have become chronic in suburbs, and petty larceny in populous centres? What more natural than that, on the other hand, the country from east to west and from north to south should swarm with beggars whose numerous posterity has known no other occupation? The latter class, after spending a great part of their lives in dependence on outdoor relief or as workhouse "casuals," in old age, as might be expected, become permanent inmates of that institution. An effectual blow cannot be struck at pauperism, I am convinced, until, as in China, the land returns to State ownership, and systematic efforts are made—compulsion where hereditary laziness stands in the way—to place on the soil, under effective supervision and guidance, the mass of the unemployed. In a generation or two, the yawning gulf which now exists between the overfed rich, who revel in sensuality, and the underfed poor, who must inevitably be criminals or paupers, would almost disappear. The other remedies which have been proposed would, of course, have to be put concurrently in operation.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN ENGLAND.

IT has been stated in a previous chapter that England and China radically differ in their respective theories of crime, and consequently in their treatment of it. In England, the custom for ages and generations has been for judges to look upon transgressions of the law simply as external acts verified by approved evidence without regard to their specific causes, the conditions under which they are committed, or the effect of the punishment inflicted on the characters of offenders. The law as administered in England for centuries, and until law reform associations set to work in earnest, has been an active agent in fostering into activity those very criminal tendencies it was expressly framed to discourage. It makes no inquisition, as a rule, into the circumstances under which crime of any kind is committed—whether resulting from constitutional defect, heredity, the pressure of want, the associations of habitually bad companions, in which the criminal may have been born, bred, or moulded, or from some other irresistible force. Yet every intelligent observer of human life and conduct knows that nothing is more obvious than the difference between one temperament and another as a predisposing cause of actions. Some anæmic and phlegmatic persons are hardly capable of feeling excited about anything, while others, full-blooded, robust, mercurial, and generally impulsive, are roused to uncontrollable passion on the smallest provocation. Innocence of crimes of violence, in some cases, is due to a lack of intense feeling, while in others

they spring naturally out of a fiery, if ill-regulated, organisation.

As Charles Kingsley truly says—though the spirit of his words have a much wider application than the words themselves—"There are drunkards from birth, harlots from the breast, and men and women damned before they are born." Or to modify the words of Shakspeare, some are born criminals, some achieve crime, and some have crime thrust upon them. In order to secure the Christian Deity, whom His worshippers reverence as perfect in wisdom, justice, and goodness, from all suspicion of blame for the shortcomings of His intelligent creatures, English theologians have always laid the greatest possible stress on the absurd doctrine of equal personal responsibility in all cases of wrong-doing by human beings. But the manifest drift of European science and philosophy, during the past thirty years, has been to minimise the bearing of individual responsibility, to make every man "a creature of circumstances," and to throw the onus of responsibility for the failure of the stray units of society to keep within the bounds which the law prescribes, upon an inherited, badly-shaped brain, combined with the gross neglect shown by society itself to make the path of right much easier for every man, woman, and child to tread. It is the utterly false dogma of equal personal responsibility—a stock dogma of the priesthood alike in Catholic and Protestant churches—which is accountable for that most preposterous attribute of legal punishment in England—vindictiveness, a heritage handed down from our anthropoidal ancestors, to which we are reconciled under the soothing name of "deterrent." Up to a short time ago all other considerations were made subservient to this. No matter if the criminal were the product of generations of evildoers, confirmed bad example and diabolical misdirection, and therefore more to be pitied

than blamed, the law simply narrowed the question as to whether or not he had or had not been proved to have done something held to be legally punishable by the magistrate. No matter if the prisoner was young and reclaimable under a different sort of penal discipline, from that to which he was sentenced, his restoration to a law-abiding life was treated as quite secondary to his condemnation to herd with malefactors possibly ten times worse than himself, and under whose influence, combined with a purposely insufficient diet, he was simply qualifying for greater proficiency in crime. As the phrase went, "the law must be satisfied," which, translated into other language, simply means that it must have its "pound of flesh" out of him in degradation and suffering, even if the penal course appointed by the law should render his return to correct habits hopeless, and swell infinitely the criminal ranks, which its aim should above all things be to thin.

Happily, the old *lex talionis* derived from the blood-exacting penal code of the ancient Hebrew tribal God, Jahveh, is being discredited in proportion as the influence of science, philosophy, and humanity is coming to the front. Still, however, much has to be done before the true theory of the origin of crime is practically recognised by Parliament, the bench, and the bar, and its punishment is made, as far as possible, corrective, instead of retaliatory. At the same time, it is readily admitted that there will always be numerous cases which, from one cause or another, are impervious to remedial agency. There need be no difficulty in permanently separating such cases from those which are reclaimable. China is entitled to the merit, as distinguished from Christian nations, who saddle the wrongdoer himself with the blame of his conduct and character being what they are, of tracing crime to causes outside the offender. Hence the authorities in my country, as previously remarked,



hold parents who might have done more to keep the criminal in check liable to punishment for neglect of parental duty. I do not say that my people have as yet fully comprehended the true view of crime and the normal relation between crime and punishment, and how punishment should be adapted to the varying circumstances of criminals. But if we take a period of, say, the last thousand years, as a whole it will be found that the Chinese have been more rational in their punitive administration than the English have been.

For centuries, day by day, Newgate and Tyburn were like human slaughter-houses, capital punishment being in force for what would now be deemed comparatively small offences, and the number of victims would be considered absolutely appalling by Chinamen. So completely was the element of retribution paramount in the punishment of crime. The grim humour of the position was that certain crimes, such as sheep stealing, which were punished with death, increased under the extreme penalty of the law and diminished when they ceased to be visited with the death penalty ! But, with all its boasted religion and civilisation, the United Kingdom still requires the patrol of 30,000 policemen, costing an annual expenditure of £2,000,000, apart from £6,000,000 devoted to gaols. Many scores of thousands every year are convicted in the United Kingdom of crime and sent to prison for various terms or to the gallows ; and this is only a single regiment of the full standing army of criminals who prey on English society, invade by day and by night the peace of homes, and make continual attacks—with more or less success—on life and property. With provoking apathy the countless sufferers from crime stand by and witness the farce of scores of thousands of chronic offenders against criminal law being allowed to commit larceny and burglary, obtain money

under false pretences, and perpetrate murder, go to prison, finish their term, be liberated, resume their old tricks, and come up again for trial, to be again sentenced at frequent intervals. In this shameful and monotonous round of folly these hardened evil-doers often spend their days, until they have no more strength left to defraud the public. Having lived most of their lives as predatory animals and guests of the Queen, they spend their remaining years in the workhouse, at the cost of the ratepayers of their parish. Nevertheless, if that house of "irresponsible chatter," most fitly called *Parliament*, were to decree to-morrow that all habitual criminals convicted four times after the age of twenty-one should be deprived of their liberty for life, and that all the members of their families should be banished to a remote part of the British Empire, where they would be vigorously trained to follow an industrious and honest life, far away from the temptations that have overpowered their parents, the bulk of coarse offences would gradually cease, a number of gaols might safely be closed, and rates and taxes reduced. The police have already a sufficient acquaintance with the haunts of criminals to root them out, with the greatest possible advantage to their posterity. All that is needed is that the Laputan statesmen of England should rescue a little time from their accustomed solemn law mangling, party wrangling, and bungling foreign diplomacy to apply their minds to this social problem in earnest. There is no want of knowledge as to the main causes of crime, and how these may be reduced to a *minimum*. Statesmanship alone is awaited to apply the spark to the fuel ready to be kindled.

Among the prevailing types of British criminals is the pickpocket who dexterously relieves people of their purses, watches, chains, and scarf pins in crowded thoroughfares, omnibuses, tramcars, and railway carriages. The name of

burglar is a familiar household word. He may pay an untimely visit through the roof, the window, or by forcing the back door, as best suits his convenience. The begging-letter impostor sometimes imposes on benevolent ladies in the "evening of unmarried life," and on kind-hearted clergymen. The concocted tale of woe which is the stock-in-trade of this pretender usually describes misfortune which has overtaken the writer or his family by the recent failure of some well-known bank, or the occurrence of a fire which has rendered him houseless, or continued illness in his family which has consumed his all in doctors' bills. Sometimes, after a parade of past trials, he winds up his appeal to the charitable with the encouraging statement that a situation is awaiting him in another part of the country, but he cannot avail himself of it for want of funds to convey him to the place. In cases where he thinks a personal application and a suave address will be most effectual he adjusts his appliances accordingly. The "Long Firm" is a favourite device by which a certain class of robbers misappropriate the property of others. It is represented by conspiracy. Several criminals combine and order various kinds of goods to be sent to places appointed for their reception. The men in attendance inform the man delivering the goods to them that they are only clerks, and that the partners are not in. If the senders are weak enough to leave the goods without receiving payment, no time is lost by the "Long Firm" in turning them into cash, and a hasty removal is made to fresh premises. When a number of partners are actively engaged in this fraudulent business in different parts of a large town at the same time, the amount of plunder put in their power is considerable. A very plausible way of imposing on people of rustic simplicity is for a deceitful expert to come up with a bland face to a stranger from the country, and claim to have known him

many years ago, regretting, however, that he himself should have grown out of the recollection of the person he is addressing. The impostor, if he thinks his course safe, proceeds to ask about the health of certain imaginary relatives of the country cousin. The moral of this extemporised friendship is not long deferred. An accident has befallen the intruder which has left him without funds, and a polite request is made for a loan which, of course, would never be repaid.

There are umbrella thieves who pay professional visits to churches, libraries, and other public places, their speciality being to snatch off umbrellas, which are pawned as promptly as possible. A class of shrewd criminals feign illness, and fall down in the street, in the hope that some kindly-disposed people may take compassion on their apparent distress, which they are not unmindful to say—as part of their scheme—is due to want of food and shelter.

A very common form of British crime is defaulting by rate collectors, secretaries, and bank cashiers, whose salaries are not equal to their expenditure. They may occasionally be tempted to deviate from the straight path by misfortune of some kind, but more frequently, I fear, by extravagant living, gambling, betting, or Stock Exchange speculation. With temptations to ruinous ventures of the kinds named, England is honeycombed, and a large section of her people demoralised. It too often happens that trustees, executors, and trusted legal advisers apply to their own use securities entrusted to their care, and are obliged to live for lengthened periods in quarters far removed from their families, set apart for them by the State.

An advertisement for a servant sometimes brings a female who only wants to be allowed a few minutes by herself in the drawing-room while the lady of the house is preparing to see her. She skilfully tucks under her waterproof, when

nobody is looking, one or two "unconsidered trifles," not likely to be readily missed. For the nonce she talks of taking the situation, but really her mission is already accomplished. An interesting variety in these plundering manoeuvres consists of a visit paid to a house by a man who wants to see the occupant on important business, but he always takes care to call when he is pretty sure the master is absent. He only wishes to be left in the hall or the drawing-room for a brief period, to allow of his escape with what portable articles he can easily run away with before he can be laid hold of. Or the lady of the house is informed by the intriguer that her husband has just met with an accident in the street, and that he requires a cab fare to convey him to the hospital. There is a class of thieves who cleverly place network inside the opening of street post-office pillar boxes for the purpose of intercepting letters when posted, in the hope of finding enclosures of money or valuables. It is painful to have to say that detectives have, now and then, been met with in England who accept bribes to connive at crime.

It is estimated that there are 40,000 thieves and depredators always at large in the United Kingdom, and that 23,000 are apprehended annually on suspicion of indictable crimes. Of the latter number about 12,000 are annually committed for trial.

The miscellaneous category of thieves given above does not include the class who too often pursue their calling with impunity as fraudulent promoters of limited liability companies, endorsers to banks of false securities, people who knowingly and deliberately contract debts to landlords, tradesmen and others, which they never had the remotest prospect of paying. The false and reckless way in which they live makes their whole career a prolonged unprincipled gamble. There have been merchants in London who,



when they were unable to hypothecate with the banks honest securities against advances, manufactured bills and shipping documents on which they deceived bankers into advancing to them large amounts, while the alleged securities, thus accepted, were not worth the paper they were written upon. I have known the secretary of a bank in London, who fell into the hands of stockbrokers, who dragged him into the huge speculative quagmire in Throgmorton-street, London, where he was tempted by the sirens who haunt the place to part not only with all his own money, but with securities valued at £60,000 belonging to the bank in which he was employed, and which he "melted." His crime—the first with which he was ever chargeable—was expiated by a very long imprisonment.

Another species of crime frequently practised is the misrepresentation of mining property in a prospectus which is afterwards discovered to be *bogus*. They offer it to the public as genuine, and induce investors to take shares, who, they well know, must lose their money. I have known a large firm of London merchants conspire with the resident ambassador in England of a foreign State, in order to render defective accounts of the product which they sold on behalf of the Government of that foreign State, that the amount of unlawful spoil shared between the firm and the ambassador might be hidden from the Government. Had a criminal action been undertaken against the firm there was ample evidence to commit them; but their reputation was saved by bribery. Investors in England have lent more than £1,000,000,000 to foreign countries, the greater part of which the lenders will never see again, the mass of the borrowing States having become bankrupt. In many cases the interest on the loans remains unpaid. The millions of money which have mysteriously disappeared, in commis-

sions and charges under false representations, when the net amounts due to the borrowing Governments, in each instance, came to be paid over to them, has often been astounding to the uninitiated. Philip of Macedon used to say that there was no cranny too small for a bag of gold to go through, and leakage has occurred in connection with foreign loans, enriching beyond the bounds of honesty, as well as beyond the wildest dreams of avarice, the contractors and syndicates by whom these loans were raised—had it always formed the subject of a lawsuit, would have blighted many a flourishing reputation and added considerably to the inmates of Wormwood Scrubs, Pentonville, and Holloway Prisons. The “pickings” out of some Colonial loans, too, though incomparably smaller, have not always redounded to the credit of some of the agents concerned.

It cannot be denied that certain crimes of violence have for some years been declining in proportion to population, but the condition of England in respect to crime for centuries previously was fearful beyond description; and although the ignorance of the population was not less remarkable than the moral wickedness, the peers, squires, and bishops conspired to oppose the intellectual and moral elevation of the poor by education and cheap literature. Lord Melbourne, the confidential adviser of Queen Victoria before as well as after her marriage, “questioned the advantage of general education as a means of promoting knowledge in the world, since people got on very well without it.” The Bishop of Durham, half a century ago, “believed that education was not likely to make its way among the poor.” The Bishop of Exeter said that “if, when rector, he had started a school in his parish, the squire would have laughed in his face.” It is between sixty and seventy years since, for the first time, private voluntary English education

societies received subsidies from the Government. And it is significant — the opinion of the upper classes of that day notwithstanding — that it was not until educational agencies had been established that crime, at least of the violent sort, showed any signs of abatement. Between 1805 and 1841 the population of the United Kingdom grew at the rate of 79 per cent., and the criminal increased sixfold greater, 12'482 per cent. Between 1842 and 1855 population increased by 2,500,000, but there was no increase in the ratio of crime. From 1855 to 1875 population increased 4,475,000, with a decrease of 2298 in committals, 2074 in convictions, and 1140 in secondary sentences, and 935 in penal sentences. This improvement, equally with what has taken place in the decade following 1875, and subsequently, coincides with the period when libraries, play-grounds, and public schools were extended. But our felicitations on this encouraging transformation are somewhat damped by the reflection that the decrease which has been noted in the more violent kinds of crime among the lower orders has been concurrent with a marked rise in suicide, murder, and crime associated with business transactions, such as embezzlement, forgery, falsification of balance-sheets, and other misdemeanours which could only be committed by persons having had a fair amount of school training.

To be at once just and effective, punishment should be remedial as well as deterrent and retributive. Perpetrators of outrages on the person ought to be whipped. Indeed the success of this kind of punishment in reducing garotte robbery from the dimensions of a terrible epidemic to a small minimum is generally acknowledged. It is necessary that punishments, to be deterrent, should be extremely distasteful to offenders. As the thief and the swindler are usually characterised by laziness, they can best be punished

and reformed by hard labour, coupled with useful instruction and improving companionship. Crime of every sort may be traced to a three-fold cause — passion, covetousness, and want. The first-named cause always—and sometimes the second — is answerable for crimes against the person, murder included. It cannot be said that three or six months' imprisonment to a low-minded wretch, who has maimed a helpless woman for life, is likely to be deterrent, or affords time for the reform of the criminal. As English law is administered up-to-date, brutal persons might well suppose that it lightly esteems personal security, and accounts it a more serious crime to steal a few shillings than to injure a limb for life. Nothing could impress a thief with a sense of his offence against the neighbour he had wronged, than his being compelled, to a reasonable extent, to make restitution of what he has stolen. Inveterate prisoners often indulge the savage satisfaction that the community is taxed to keep them. But if they were forced to earn their own keep in prison, this, while a wholesome exercise for many, would add bitterness to the restriction of their liberty. In the United States the expenses of some prisons are entirely met by the labour of prisoners.

The chief evil of the English prison system is the want of classification of prisoners. All who are sentenced to five years can reduce their term to four years and three months by good conduct. The first nine months they have to pass in solitary confinement. Then they are removed to convict prisons and are mixed up indiscriminately with prisoners, many of whom are utterly irreclaimable—dead to shame and to all reforming influences. The more innocent inmates, who are the victims of a single and sudden temptation, are contaminated, taught by practice in many a prison that labour is valueless. The result is that they go

back to freedom ten times more the children of hell than before. It is the professional and incorrigible class of criminals which forms by far the largest number, and they wield a disastrous power over inmates of prisons more open to good influence. The remaining portion of prisoners is very diversified. Some of them are educated and bearing the penal consequences of one step astray. A large class have crossed the dividing line between right and wrong, impelled by the drink demon. A few have been brought by poverty to crime. Many are very young men who ought never to have been in a convict prison at all.

The law which should enable a judge, at his discretion, to save a culprit from the degradation of going to gaol on his first conviction could not fail to preserve many a man and woman from graduating as habitual "gaol birds." Numbers enter as mere novices in crime, but if sentenced for a long term they are brought into close relations with the lowest and most abandoned, among whom they learn for years the trade of law breaking. In the prison school, the children of couples whose ancestors have been denizens of slums and companions of prostitutes, paupers, and criminals for ages, while mumbling lessons they are engaged in ribald conversation; if silent, they are making filthy, licentious drawings on slates. In work-rooms there are fifty old thieves to two novices. Grossly immoral and obscene intercourse does its natural work. Even warders of prisons are sometimes discovered to be far from immaculate in their relations with those under their charge. There is a tacit understanding between many old thieves and some of the prison officials set over them. Warders, being as a rule badly paid, have been known to take bribes from friends of convicts to secure for them some relaxation of prison rules and a fictitious character, while they often report unfavourably of men obnoxious to them for some selfish



reason, whose constitutions are ruined by bread and water diet. The usual topics discussed by the rank and file of inmates are the art of thieving, the causes of failure in burglaries, the newest inventions for picking locks, opening safes, robbing on railways, and the best districts for shoplifting. The more abominable the language the more it is enjoyed by some of those who superintend the convicts and are supposed to assist in their reformation. It cannot be doubted that a large number of the prisoners are quite reclaimable, and should be kept apart from old offenders. Those whose training has been totally neglected ought to be taught a trade in their cells, and, if necessary, should receive instructions from schoolmasters. There should be more care exercised in the selection of prison officers, and the warders should have their duties made definite to their understanding by the governor and chaplain.

The gravest cause of the miscarriage of justice in England is the unjust spirit of the criminal law which holds offences against *property* to be immeasurably more serious than offences against the *person*. This distorted view is only too patent in the influence it has, perhaps unconsciously, upon the minds of judges. Even for offences of the same nature the inequality of the sentences pronounced by different magistrates, and sometimes by the same magistrates at different times, is nothing short of scandalous. But the contrast in punishments awarded for offences against the *person*, as compared with those against *property*, is constantly thrust on public notice, and invariably shocks the sense of justice in every well-balanced mind. Every time proofs of this public and shameless outrage on justice occurs a terribly immoral lesson is brought home to the large class who take their notions of what conduct is venal and what is trivial from decisions of the law. The harm thus done is incalculable. To this unavowed but sinister influence of the

law in imbuing the mind with confused ideas of morality is to be attributed much of the brutality which exists among the lowest classes in England.

No improvement can possibly be expected in the manners and habits of the English people so long as the administration of law is so uncertain and unfair as to excite public contempt. It is not surprising that M. E. de Laveleye describes the English as "a great people under bad laws." Again he says, "If honesty were not the general rule of English life, the imperfections of its judicial system would induce a state of affairs only comparable to that of Turkish civilisation." Punishments as too often enforced are destitute alike of deterrent and remedial virtue. A woman before a Dublin magistrate had been imprisoned 200 times; another at York had been in gaol 150 times. A man before a London police-court was sentenced to one month's imprisonment, who had been in prison 100 times. Innumerable cases of the same sort might be adduced to show the mere automatic movement of the police and the court, and their total insensibility to the gross caricature of law, justice, and criminal reformation. The marvel is that the ratepayers do not rise *en masse* and demand the admission of the light of reason into criminal court and prison administration, if only on the score of economy. Why should the money of the ratepayers be squandered purposelessly in heavy costs of apprehending many scores of times the same offenders on the same kind of charge, especially as prison discipline had long ceased to have the smallest effect in deterring or reforming them? Such "habit and repute" transgressors before they have been convicted six times ought to be considered as having forfeited their liberty for life, and be compelled, in perpetual seclusion, to earn their living so long as their strength permits, under the control of prison officials.

In no department of English criminal law is there more judicial uncertainty than in regard to murder. The law on that head is well described as "most evasive and sophistical," often involving a grievous miscarriage of justice. Within a given period, out of 281 sentenced to death, only 142, or about one-half, were hanged. English juries are not unfrequently influenced by bias of some sort in finding a verdict in cases of capital crime. When a jurymen once was asked why he and his colleagues brought in a verdict so distinctly against the evidence and the ruling of the judge, he replied: "Did you think we were going to hang a handsome man like that?" If capital punishment is to remain in the criminal code, why should not an English jury, like a Scotch one, have an alternative verdict between *guilty* and *not guilty—not proven*? Why should there not be murder in the second degree, or "aggravated manslaughter," with some penalty short of death, but justly proportionate to the offence? Only thus can the consciences of some juries be protected in giving their verdict. I say nothing of China in this connection, which, with all her wisdom, may have still something to learn in regard to capital punishment, except that this is inflicted rarely when the stupendous size of her population is taken into account. But in the face of the punishment of death, which is supposed to follow convictions of murder, that crime has a tendency to increase in England, while most other serious crimes diminish in proportion to the growth of British population. I believe the continuance of the death penalty in England is a barbarous relic of old Hebrew times, when a tribal God was worshipped who thirsted for the sacrificial blood of man and beast. My countrymen, unfortunately, have also derived the same fetish of vengeance from a pre-historic savage source, but more sparingly devote victims on its altars. The great Chinese sage, Lao-tse, who was contemporary

with Confucius, condemns capital punishment. His words are, "Be strictly correct yourself, but do not cut and carve other people." It is reasonable to expect that ere many more decades pass all great nations, both of ancient and modern civilisation, will abandon alike the knife, the halter, and the electric battery, now wielded by the public executioner. Whether the object of the "life-for-life" principle be regarded as the prevention of murder or the reform of the murderer, it is equally futile. Murder is either premeditated or unpremeditated. If it is premeditated it is a fixed madness, for it is quite as contrary to soundness of mind to deliberately take another's life as to take one's own. If it is unpremeditated and the outcome of intense passion suddenly provoked, it may be termed a short madness with which the most humane and high-minded of men might at any time be uncontrollably fired. Up to the present, however, stupendous inconsistency appears in the English verdict of proved murder as distinguished from that of proved suicide. On the former the offender is held to be fully *compos mentis*, and wholly responsible for his actions. But if he kills himself the verdict pronounces him irresponsible and of "unsound mind." Ye shades of Mill, Huxley, and Darwin! what an outrage on modern scientific psychology! It is just as absurd to do away with murder by death punishment as to cure rheumatism by shaving off one's moustache. There is no congenital relation whatever between the two things, and the day must come when hanging or decapitation for murder will seem as ridiculous as burning was as a penalty for the superstition of witchcraft.

The following timely and forcible remarks from an influential London daily make plain how very far behind the United States of America England is in preventing the spread of crime by the reform of the criminal before he

reaches an age when he has become hardened beyond recovery.

“Imprisonment is not the only method of dealing with young offenders over the age of sixteen. Large numbers of offenders who have passed that age are committed for a lengthened period to the State Reformatory at Elmira, where really serious attempts are made, and in the majority of cases successfully made, to fit them for the duties of life. In all cases where the offender is physically feeble and unfit to earn a living he is subjected to a course of bodily treatment and bodily exercise calculated to invigorate him, and to bring him as near as possible to the physical condition of the normal man. Very frequently crime is merely a product of physical incapacity to endure the unremitting strain of an industrial career. The feeble and decadent children in our large cities are of too degenerate an organisation to respond punctually and continuously, day by day and month by month, to the inexorable call of the factory whistle. They too often come of diseased and enfeebled parentage, badly nurtured in infancy and childhood, often orphaned and homeless at the most critical period of life, it is no wonder that numbers of these juveniles utterly break down when compelled to take a part in working the modern industrial machine. This collapse is not the consequence of an idle and vicious disposition. In many cases it is the outcome of sheer physical incompetence. Dismissed from the ranks of industry, a youth of this description readily drifts into the standing army of crime. What is required for this class of offender is not the quack specific of seven days’ solitude on bread and water; this nostrum only aggravates and intensifies the disease. It still further reduces an already emaciated frame, and makes it literally a physical impossibility for the offender to earn a living when his term of punishment has expired.



“The proper method of dealing with our degenerate juvenile offenders is to put them through a course of discipline which will develop their enfeebled bodies, and, if possible, render them capable of earning an honest livelihood. That this can be done is abundantly proved by the results of the system for treating this class of delinquent in the State of New York. Let us select one case as an example. In the ‘Reformatory Year Book’ we are shown the photograph of a juvenile offender at the time of his admission, and another set of photographs of the same youth some time before his discharge. At the time of his admission, it is easy to see from the photograph, even if we were not also told in the letterpress, that this youth was in a state of general deterioration. The doctor of the institution reports upon him as being badly nourished, greatly reduced physically, in an anæmic condition, with feeble circulation and shortness of breath. Had this feeble lad been subjected to our penal methods he would have gone down several stages lower in the scale of physical decrepitude. In America it was seen that his criminal life was probably attributable to his inability to work, and he was accordingly subjected to a regimen which transformed him in a few months from a puny weakling to a sturdy boy overflowing with life.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE LAND QUESTION IN ENGLAND.

NOTHING in my whole experience as a Chinese subject—long resident under the British flag—more forcibly convinces me that the country of my adoption is barbarous than a study of its land laws, which embody the grossest favouritism to great landlords and corresponding injustice to the bulk of the people. In contrast with the equitable and beneficent regulations affecting land in my own country—which I propose to describe towards the close of this chapter—the English land laws clearly point to a savage origin. The most hasty glance at their practical operation shows them to be the most direct and active cause of the destitution, squalor, pauperism, and crime, which brood over the United Kingdom like a hideous nightmare.

In England and Wales alone 4500 persons own 17,500,000 acres, and in Scotland 1700 persons own 17,000,000 acres; 8142 landlords in Great Britain and Ireland own 46,500,000 acres. These landlords hold among them 9,000,000 more acres than the entire area of England and Wales put together, or 8,000,000 acres more than twice the total acreage of Scotland. If the land brings in 15s. per acre per annum, which is believed to be an under-estimate, this small group of persons receive about £35,000,000 a year, without doing any work for it. Then let us take the incomes of the ground landlords in centres of population at £100,000 each—one of them receives £1,000,000 a year or more—and this will give a yearly revenue of £10,000,000 to 100

ground landlords. This, added to the return just stated from pastoral and agricultural lands, will represent £45,000,000 per annum, abstracted annually by 8142 persons out of the industry, wealth, and enterprise of the Kingdom. Setting aside £10,000,000 a year for the maintenance of the 8142 costly pensioners, we have £35,000,000 a year available by them for investment.

In three years, after paying £35,000,000 to prevent them from suffering hardships, the following undertakings, as Mr. Michael Davitt has shown, might be provided out of the balance :—Six national galleries for the fine arts at £500,000 each ; 50 technical schools with scholarships for poor children at £50,000 each ; 50 schools of agriculture at £50,000 each ; 20 reformatory schools at £50,000 each ; 200 public gymnasiums and playgrounds at £5000 each ; 300 public parks of 500 acres at £50 per acre or £25,000 each park ; 200 mechanics' institutes at £5000 each ; 500 working men's clubs and halls at £2000 each ; 200 public baths and wash-houses at £5000 each ; 20 orphan asylums at £50,000 each ; 10 asylums for the blind at £50,000 each ; 10 asylums for the deaf and dumb at £50,000 each ; 20 ophthalmic hospitals at £50,000 each ; 50 lying-in-hospitals at £10,000 each ; 20 public hospitals at £50,000 each ; 20 fever hospitals at £50,000 each ; 20 hospitals for consumption at £50,000 each ; 100 floating hospitals for sailors at £10,000 each ; 50 convalescent hospitals at £50,000 each ; 20 sea-bathing infirmaries at £50,000 each ; 20 penitentiaries for females at £50,000 each ; 50 temporary refuges for discharged prisoners at £10,000 each ; 500 soup kitchens at £2000 each ; 1000 lifeboats at £500 each ; 1000 fishing boats for poor fishermen at £500 each ; 1000 sets of nets for the same at £500 each ; 25,000 pensioners (enfeebled workmen) at £40 each ; the reclamation and purchase of 1,000,000 acres waste land at £13 per acre.

The land so reclaimed, besides producing and cheapening food, if let by the State at £1 per acre, would yield the nation a total rental of £1,000,000 per annum. All this splendidly beneficial work would cost £50,000,000, or one and a-half year's reserved portion of the income of the 8142 landlords, after allowing £5,000,000 for their adequate support, for which they return no benefit. For the remaining half of the £100,000,000, to the good, after deducting the amount necessary for their maintenance—viz., £50,000,000—more than 250 artisans' dwellings could be built at a cost of £200 each, where slums now exist. In this calculation I have not taxed more than one-fourth of the revenues derived from the nation's property by this small privileged class who claim a share of it worth more than £3,000,000,000. If, moreover, the enormous amount of "unearned increment" which these land monopolists appropriate—despite its being produced solely by the labour and outlay of others—could be recovered from them, further valuable additions might be made to public institutions for the benefit of the poor and the needy.

"When the 'sacredness of property' is talked of," said Mr. J. Stuart Mill, "it should always be remembered that any such sacredness does not belong in the same degree to landed property. No man made the land. It is the original inheritance of the whole species. Its appropriation is wholly a question of general expediency. When private property in land is not expedient it is unjust. The essential principle of property being to assure to all persons what they have produced by their labour and accumulated by their abstinence, this principle cannot apply to that which is not the produce of labour, the raw material of the earth [property in land] is only valid in so far as the proprietor of the land is its improver. In no sound theory was it ever contemplated that the proprietor of land should be merely a sinecurist quartered upon it."

Yet, against 180,000 families owning freehold estates in the United Kingdom 200 years ago, less than 160 persons own half England and three-fourths of Scotland now, and these landowners treat their freehold rights as of infinitely greater importance than the happiness of the peasantry in their neighbourhood. So far are these non-productive parasites of the soil from discharging the responsibilities inseparable from ownership so unique, that in Great Britain and Ireland no less than about 29,000,000 acres of land are left in an uncultivated state, of which 11,000,000 at least, are capable of profitable cultivation. At the same time 7,000,000 acres of public commons have been illegally annexed, to increase the already large estates of adjoining proprietors, during the last 200 years. Twenty-five years before the accession of the House of Brunswick, land paid nearly two-thirds of all the Imperial taxes in the United Kingdom, the rents received by the landed aristocracy being then only the seventh part of what they are to-day. Now that the yearly national expenditure of the United Kingdom is over £100,000,000 a year, less than one-seventieth portion of the burden falls on land. How different the case in France, where land bears one-sixth; in India, where land bears nearly one-half of the total taxation; and in China, where land is wholly national property, and the rent it yields is almost the sole tax in the Empire.

With a land system descended from feudal times which has created in the United Kingdom the two social extremes of an idle and pampered class on the hand, and an over-worked and under-paid class on the other, it is not surprising that misery so appalling and widespread should be bred among the latter. When the late Dr. Fraser, before his elevation to the Episcopal bench, served as a Joint Commissioner, and reported on the condition of the agricultural labourers in the rural districts he was deeply impressed with



the startling extent of their wretchedness, although the delicacy of his position as a clergyman unfortunately apparently prevented him from boldly assigning the effect to its true cause. He tells us, however, that under the very shadow of lordly mansions and abounding wealth in Gloucestershire "type after type of social life was almost degraded to the level of barbarism"; that near Lavenham, "the cottages are unfit for human habitation"; that in Norfolk, the dwellings were "miserable," "deplorable," "detestable," and a "disgrace to a Christian community"; that near Docket, "the whole atmosphere is sensual and human nature is degraded into something below the level of the swine." The Marquis of Salisbury—one of the class whose neglect of poor rustics, impoverished under the English land laws—generously proposes to build better dwellings for the people *at the public expense*. But let the land be first re-valued and taxed at its current market value; then, but not till then, will rates and taxes have an equitable incidence and distribution and the nation's property be taxed for the nation's good. Then, but not till then, may people who inherit poverty and suffering hope to be lifted above their present demoralising surroundings.

The main point to bear in mind in considering the ruined condition of agriculture, of agricultural villages, and of agricultural labourers in England, is that even before the hated Stuart dynasty had passed away the great feudal lords were in reality tenants of the Crown, paying rent. But in the reign of Charles II. (1660) the landed classes succeeded in converting that profligate monarch to a scheme by which they and their heirs should become absolute freeholders without paying rent and without purchasing the land of which they had only been previously recognised as tenants. By the same arrangement they were also confirmed in the right of forcing others who might become their tenants to

pay to them rents which they petitioned should be remitted to themselves by the Crown. To make up to the Exchequer the loss of revenue consequent on lordly occupants ceasing to pay rent, an excise duty was levied on all liquors brewed or distilled for sale. The Act which, under forms of law, perpetrated this gigantic fraud, inflicted a terrible blow, under which England groans and staggers to this day. The Act was passed by the narrow majority of 151 to 149, from which it appears that the landlords could not command so large a parliamentary majority in 1660 as they can in 1897. Moreover, it must be borne in mind that the present landed aristocracy, 10,200 of whom now hold two-thirds of England, are still, by law, tenants of the Crown, although they and their ancestors have, by the fraud of 1660 and other Acts passed by landowning Parliaments, managed almost ever since to evade payment of rent.

In the reign of William and Mary, however, a Land Tax on the annual value was imposed of 4s. in the pound. This tax, by the notorious Act of 1798, was made permanent on the gross annual value of all landed property, including mines, quarries, ironworks, &c. But *mirabile dictu!* in order to accommodate lordly interests at a cruelly heavy and perpetual sacrifice of revenue to the country, by which all other interests suffer, the valuation of the taxed lands, made as far back as 1692, was the one adopted, and it continues to be acted upon until now, *though the average value of the land has increased fifteen to twenty-fold, in the interval of two hundred years.* In 1693 the land tax, thus fixed, produced two millions sterling. After allowing for the redemption of a portion of this tax, it ought at the present time to be producing over twenty millions sterling per annum. But it has been so deliberately tampered with and whittled down by successive Parliaments of landowners who were masters of the situation, owing to the ignorance

of the population on the subject, that the proceeds of the tax now do not exceed £1,129,000, though it is still represented as a tax of 4s. in the £. The 1942 persons who own two-thirds of Ireland contrived to secure exemption from the land tax altogether.

Meanwhile the public expenditure kept increasing, owing to great, useless, and often preventible wars, and other causes. An enormous national debt was incurred. To meet annual interest charges on this, amounting still to about £27,000,000, with other increasing public burdens, fresh taxes and duties had to be created. But as the land—which ought to be the chief source of national wealth—had failed to contribute more than a merely nominal share to the taxation of the country under the unrighteous policy of landowning law-makers, new taxes and duties were levied on articles of consumption, which were and still are paid by the masses, who were and still are by far the largest buyers of these articles. The result is that when poor wage-earners drink their glass of beer, spirits, or wine, or their cup of tea, they have the melancholy satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to pay to the crown the main part of the rent of the vast estates of the *landed* aristocracy and gentry, and of making up for their flagrant shortcomings as taxpayers. No wonder landowners have discouraged the education of the artisan and labouring classes. Their retention of the people in a state of mental darkness has ever been to their privileged order a matter of life and death. It is only very recently that the patient multitude in England have begun to wake up to the wholesale robberies which have been practised upon them by their social superiors in the manner indicated above.

How far the peers and other English landowners were animated by patriotism in passing such Acts as I have named may be judged by other specimens of their legislative skill

which may be quoted. About the year 1663 an Act was passed levying 16s. 6d. a quarter on foreign wheat. In 1814, however, protective duties culminated in England, and the same upper classes carried an Act prohibiting the import of foreign wheat whenever the home average market value was under the famine prices of 80s. per quarter, and also prohibiting the import of foreign flesh meat or fish, living or dead, excepting turtle, turbot, and sturgeon, which were admitted duty free. It needs no extraordinary perception to see that the sole object of landlord Parliaments in bringing about such artificially high prices of food was to enable the farmers to pay landlords high rents. Even the "sliding scale" of 1829, which imposed an import duty of only 24s. 8d. per quarter when wheat was at 62s., was a concession extorted by the ruinous consequences of their previous exacting measures. But so far from the "sliding scale" mitigating the hardships entailed by the legislative oppression already inflicted, it had the effect of completing the ruin of English manufactures, and of often compelling starving millions to pay 1s. and upwards for a 4 lb. loaf.

Popular agitation could no longer be repressed. The landlords had fiercely resisted all efforts made by the downtrodden people to cancel the heartless legislation under which they were perishing. In 1826 many thousands of working men both in England and Ireland had died of starvation under the iniquitous corn laws. Manufacturers were in many cases forced to close their establishments and seek refuge in the insolvency court. The national anger under this inhumanity of an avaricious ruling minority had reached the exploding point. Bristol was goaded on by distress to desperation, and Birmingham threatened to march on London. Not till the throes of a bloody revolution were imminent would the landlords submit to take the taxes off the bread of the suffering multitude. In further

illustration of the greed of the landlords it may be noticed that while in the eighty-two years ending 1879 collectively, the probate, legacy, and succession duties on personal property amounted to 180 millions sterling, the far larger value of landed property transferred to heirs during the same period was let off with total duties amounting to only twenty millions sterling.

The land laws, by some of which the United Kingdom is still socially afflicted to an appalling extent, may now be briefly alluded to:—

There is (1) *the law of primogeniture*, which enacts that when a landlord dies without having disposed of his land by deed or will, the whole of it goes to his eldest son, leaving the other members of the family without part or lot in the inheritance. But as this law only takes effect when a landlord omits to make a will, which very rarely happens, the inconvenience caused by it is trifling compared with that resulting from some of the other land laws referred to.

(2) The unjust object and aim of *the law of distress* is directly to give the landlord a preferential claim to distrain for rent before other creditors can receive a farthing. Indeed, after the landlord has recovered all his arrears of rent, not infrequently there is nothing left for other creditors. So exceptionally privileged is the landlord as against all others who have claims on the estate of an insolvent farming tenant, that if flocks and herds belonging to another farmer on their way to market should chance to be depastured for a single night on the lands of the farmer financially embarrassed, the animals can be seized by the landlord for rent.

(3) The injustice and cruelty of the *game laws* carried out with atrocity by landowning and game-preserving magistrates have ever and anon been severely commented on.



If a wretched, hungry labourer kills a hare on the roadside, which has been destroying the scanty produce of his patch of ground, he is liable to a term of imprisonment, so long as to ensure the dispersion and ruin of his family. Mr. Kay, in his "Free Trade in Land," states he was told by a country squire that when men are brought before the magisterial bench accused of other offences which the evidence was, in the opinion of Mr. Kay's informant, quite insufficient to prove to the satisfaction of his brother justices, he said: "Oh! you musn't let him off, he's a d——d poacher!" It is proverbial in the country districts that a poacher has no chance of mercy even when tried for another crime altogether. Nor is this surprising when it is remembered that the game preserver is both plaintiff and judge where poaching is concerned. This offence against a revolting law has still a distinct tendency to make patient and well-meaning sufferers from grasping landlord law-makers into habitual and misanthropic criminals, who, under just land laws, would be contented and law-abiding citizens. There is still an annual crop of convictions for poaching running into many thousands.

(4) The core and root of landlord evils by which the United Kingdom is cursed are contained in the law of entail and settlement. By this relic of barbarism a landlord is enabled to make a deed or will to prevent his estate from being seized, sold or reduced in size during his own lifetime and for many years after his death. Let us suppose that Lord Smith comes into possession of a quarter of a million acres at the age of 30, and that he afterwards marries. The law under consideration gives him power by deed or will to direct that after his death his estates shall pass successively to A, B, and C, his children or nephews or friends, and that after the death of A, B, and C, the property shall go to the eldest son of C, if, and when he attains the age of 21.

If, at the date of the deed or will, C is an infant of a year old, and marries at 21, his eldest son will attain his majority in 21 years more. Thus the estates will have been securely tied up for 42 years at least. But should A and B be long lived, and C marries late in life, it may easily happen that no part of the estates can be sold for 70 or 80 years. No matter whether Lord Smith may have lived long or died early, the estates throughout the whole period specified must be administered according to the instructions contained in his will. If the deed should authorise that part of the rents shall be applied to enlarging the estates, or should empower the trustees to sell part of the land and invest the proceeds of sale in other land to be tied up as already described, the instructions in the document must be carried out to the letter.

Before the expiration of 60 or 80 years, C and his eldest son may make another deed or will of a similar kind, protecting the estate from sale, seizure, or division for another period of from 50 to 80 years, and so this mischievous law of entail and settlement may lock up uncultivated or cultivated land from sale or division for centuries. In great families the sole object of this perversion of justice is to hand down their names and keep up their landed wealth and influence from generation to generation, and each fresh barrier to power of sale is often raised just when the land would be liable to seizure in satisfaction for debt, and thus thrown open to purchase. The ambition of great land-owning families, moreover, is to increase their territorial possessions, wealth, and power, by marrying in their own circle. Thus one accumulation of vast estates in time becomes added to another, till earldoms develope into dukedoms. North of the Tweed, twelve persons own 4,340,000 acres, or an average of 362,000 acres each. To the lot of each of these fortunate magnates there falls an average of

565 square miles, or an aggregate to the twelve owners of 6780 square miles. Thirty-six owners in the United Kingdom hold 290 square miles each, or 6,700,000 acres among them, in the aggregate.

The case in Scotland and Ireland is worse than in England. Nine-tenths of the former country is owned by 1700 persons, and two-thirds of the latter by 1942. Two-thirds of the whole land of the United Kingdom is held by 12,479 owners. At the termination of leases of ninety-nine years and upwards these enormous tracts revert to the same owners or their descendants, with all the buildings erected and other improvements effected on the land at the expense of the leaseholders.

(5) The next evil land law to be mentioned is one which is the fitting complement of the law which has just been commented upon. I refer to the statute regulating the sale and transfer of land. This statute was purposely framed to place hindrances in the way of small buyers competing with wealthy landlords. The purchase of small or moderate-sized lots is made virtually prohibitory by the heavy legal and other charges permitted by law, since these are so excessive as to greatly increase the cost of each acre or quarter of an acre. England lags far behind nearly every civilised country, including China and the British Colonies, as regards equitable arrangements for the sale and transfer of land. Dealings in land in most other nationalities are registered at a public office, where the state of the title can be ascertained in half an hour, and the whole transaction of buying and selling completed at a trifling cost, instead of tens and hundreds of pounds and many months of delay, as in Great Britain. Even after the records have been searched and the purchaser has paid for the land, the title cannot be absolutely relied on. Sometimes oppressive claims crop up which the best conveyancers and solicitors

had failed to discover after examining a cartload of documents.

Not many years ago a British Parliamentary Committee decided that there could not be such a cheap and easy registration of titles in England as exists elsewhere so long as the great body of landowners object to it! The words of their report are: "For an institution to flourish in a free country it must offer to people the thing they want!" The committee practically express the opinion that 12,000 landlords may override with impunity the wishes of the whole population. Who can doubt, after a statement so audacious from representatives of a landowning Parliament, that defiant land monopolists are "riding for a fall."

It will be at once apparent that the concentration of the land of the United Kingdom in a few hands greatly tends to diminish its producing power, and to affect adversely all other national interests. Mr. Kay quotes a typical case, which forcibly illustrates this point. Lord —— came into possession of his estates, which were unencumbered, at twenty-one years of age, when he settled them on his family. As soon as his only son reached twenty-one another deed was prepared, settling the property on any lawful heirs that might be born to the latter. Lord —— turned out to be a reckless gambler, and, as might be expected, sustained heavy losses. He raised a loan on the security of his life interest in the estates to pay off part of his foolish liabilities. In order to escape the importunity of his creditors he fled from England. Neither the money lender, to whom the remainder of his life interest was sold nor the tenants would expend money on necessary improvements. They knew not how soon Lord —— might die, and their interest in the property would then cease. Such was the state of affairs in connection with this property for forty years. The parish church the schools, the farm buildings, and the labourers

dwellings fell into decay, while the drainage and cultivation of the land were utterly neglected. Meanwhile the law of entail prevented the land, during this whole period, from being sold as it otherwise would have been, to one buyer or to many, who would have invested money in developing its resources.

The young heir to a great estate is exposed to flattery by sycophantic competitors for his friendship and favour. He knows that his father cannot prevent him, if he lives, from succeeding to the property, and he is consequently tempted to be impatient of parental control. On attaining majority he is besieged with artful money-lenders always spreading their nets to catch such prey. Alas! how many English territorial heirs are demoralised by a premature sense of independence begotten of the British land laws! They come into their estates overwhelmed with debts contracted by their wanton extravagance, and so they are rendered incapable of doing their duty to their land or their tenantry. Their sons after them—even generations of successors—may continue to be embarrassed by heavy half-yearly interest on mortgages and innumerable other burdens which have to be discharged before a shilling of income is available for personal use. During this long period the estate is doomed by law to lingering ruin, without the smallest prospect of being put in a state of repair. Twenty years ago, a committee of the House of Lords, consisting of four great landowners, reported that three-fourths of the land of England was tied up in this shameful manner; that of twenty million acres requiring drainage, less than a seventh part had been drained, and that only one-third of the land had been properly dealt with.

Is it surprising that authorities on the subject should tell us that under treatment so criminal, the production of which the land is easily capable, should be diminished by a third



to a half? Besides, tenants, groaning under rents which would make farmers in China stand aghast, are powerless to correct agrarian evils so deep-seated as to be beyond their control. This pernicious system of class legislation has been the most potent factor in causing the loss of one-third of the harvest that, on a fair estimate, might have been reaped but for its blighting influence.

It is not difficult to see how grievous must be the effects of the system on manufactures and trade by the check it puts on the gains of the tenant farmer, and the reduction it causes in the labourers' wage fund. When, added to all these penalties, which the English people have long been paying for their toleration of so gross an outrage on economic wisdom and justice, there happens to be a bad harvest, the collective injury suffered by all classes is simply incalculable. It is absurd to suppose that boasted Land Improvement Acts, which are so impracticable in their operation, and under which not one-twentieth of the amount needed is borrowed under their provisions, can, even remotely, remedy the evils complained of. The supreme aim of the framers of these Acts obviously was to protect existing abuses in the interest of entailed heirs, present and future. The Agricultural Holdings Act, and, still more recent, facilities granted by Parliament to agricultural labourers for cultivating small allotments, must be regarded as mere tinkering expedients so long as the axe is not laid to the root essential of the evil—the law of entail and settlement.

In France three-fifths, in Belgium seven-eighths, in Sweden eleven-twelfths, and in China a vast proportion of the whole population live by cultivating the land. In England less than a fifth is devoted to this occupation. Mr. Caird ("The Landed Interest," page 143), who cannot rank as an extreme land law reformer, admits that England is becoming

every ten years "more and more of a meadow, a garden, and a playground." Nor can this be wondered at when it is considered that the land laws directly produce and maintain in their positions as legislators members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament who make the laws, and magistrates who administer them. And, as a well-informed writer says: "More than any other class of men, they set an example of self-indulgence, extravagance, frivolity, and vice, which vast numbers of the thoughtless and weak-minded among their social inferiors, think it grand to ape and follow. . . . The continual spectacle of the magnificence, extravagance, wealth and power of the landed nobility and gentry—a spectacle unparalleled by any class in any other civilised country—has aroused such a vehement spirit of envy and simulation, that for many years after a German or a Frenchman would have retired to a country life, our wealthy middle-class merchants and manufacturers continue working hard at their business, fiercely competing with, and too often successfully crushing, their less wealthy struggling neighbours, which is all the easier on account of these last being also tempted to imitation of the extravagant show constantly before their eyes, while, at the same time, they lose, as customers, the 15 or 20 millions of well-to-do agricultural population which would exist but for our land laws. In no other civilised country does the middle-class work so hard and enjoy the simple and real pleasures of life so little as in England."\* It is doubtless this insane desire of traders and manufacturers to copy the luxurious display of the land-owning class, which incites them to beat down the wages of their employés to the very lowest point that they may have the means of approaching more nearly the upper classes in their modes of living.

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\* "The English Land Laws," by J. Marshall.

Working men in towns suffer owing to the competition caused by starving labourers, driven by the land laws from the country to the already overcrowded towns. This continual migration has the natural effect of raising rents by increasing the demand for house accommodation. Workmen, unable to meet the additional cost of living so forced upon them, are compelled to seek quarters in insanitary slums and alleys. But the worst effects of this *régime*, by which the welfare of all other classes is subordinated to that of landowners, fall on the peasantry. The retrograde land policy of England—begun in the time of the Stuart dynasty, and relentlessly pursued up till now—has completely effaced from the English population that large class of independent yeoman proprietors whom England boasted as “their country’s pride.” Their lands have been swallowed up by wealthy landowners in order to swell their already overgrown power and influence. Their successors are the poor, downtrodden agricultural labourers whose wretched condition is proverbial. In Ireland this melancholy product of landlordism earns 8s. to 9s. a week. They are condemned by their employers to live not uncommonly with their families, and sometimes the pig, in a single-roomed hovel under a leaky roof, with the earth for their floor. Here they and their families eat, drink, and sleep ! Even from these miserable cabins, however, the occupants are evicted in thousands, and left to starve or beg on the roadside ; the cause, too often, being that the unfortunate peasant has improved his patch of bog or moor, and thus given the landlord’s agent ground for raising the rent to a price which he cannot pay.

Thanks to the exertions of the Agricultural Labourers’ Unions, the wages of the class are higher in England, although still at a low figure, with correspondingly inadequate dwellings. The author of “Alton Locke,” after

describing an average English peasant's hovel, with a father, mother, and six children, with a newly-married couple—ten persons in all, sleeping in one room, asks, "Are men likely to be healthy when they are worse housed than a pig, worse fed than a hound, and packed together to sleep like pilchards in a barrel?" It is significant that the lowest ebb of the labourer's supply of the bare necessities of life was Dorset, the county honoured with the seat of the late arch-philanthropist and Tory, Lord Shaftesbury, whose distinction was not at all associated with the improvement of the condition of the unhappy agricultural labourers of his own county, but with shortening the hours of factory labour for children and adults in Lancashire and Yorkshire, the chief centres of the Anti-Corn Law leaguers. How far this choice of a sphere for the manifestation of his Lordship's "Enthusiasm of Humanity," so distant from "home," where the English proverb says, truly, "charity begins," arose from his loving the factory operatives more, or from loving their employers less, must, under the peculiar circumstances, be left to each reader's own conjecture.

But even at the time referred to the state of the agricultural labourer was considerably more in need of amelioration than that of the factory operative, for whose special benefit Lord Shaftesbury and his *quondam* co-abettors of the Corn Laws carried the ten hours Bill. But is it not fair to ask if a land system can have a spark of humanity in it or be to the advantage of society, as a whole, which has reduced the peasantry of England below the level of Russian serfs? And to what end? As a writer already quoted says: "Solely to support in enormous wealth and luxury a very small class of landowners." It cannot be doubted that among the landed classes there are not a few who are more thoroughly animated by kindly feelings towards their tenants and labourers than the majority in their circles. Indeed,

where upper class feeling is supercilious and apathetic to the claims of farm labourer our censure should be somewhat tempered with pity, as those born and bred under a *régime* so selfish and so unfavourable to fairness and delicacy of mind towards "the lower classes" have strong temptations to heartless arrogance. Englishmen can well afford to reserve for a class of their own countrymen some of their occasional indignation against the colossal "rings" of American speculators who, by "bulling" or "bearing," realise a few millions of dollars. These syndicates are Lilliputians compared with the Leviathan British "ring"—the great English land octopus, whose prodigious coils embrace the three kingdoms, which has lived for centuries on the blood and sweat of its victims, and counts its ill-gotten gains by thousands of millions of pounds.

A late British peer once said that what emperors, grand dukes, and personages of that sort want, is not a well-to-do population, but "a peasantry hungry enough at home to prefer the life of a private soldier, and submissive enough to shoot their own brothers if ordered, without asking why." This was meant as a thrust at the bulk of continental rulers. But it would be satisfactory to be assured that the class to which the noble speaker himself belonged were more exemplary than they are generally reputed to be in promoting the well-being of the millions of their poorer fellow subjects whom they regard as infinitely their social inferiors.

The English feudal land laws, to which attention has been directed, have been abolished in other countries with the happiest results. The law permits no landlord in Prussia, France, America, Holland, Belgium, Lombardy, Switzerland, Denmark, or Norway, to prevent the sale of his property after his own death. In these and other countries, the first French Revolution led to the abolition of primogeniture



entails, long settlements, and intricate methods of devising land which were expressly designed to maintain the power of a feudal aristocracy, and to keep the lands from becoming the property of workmen peasants and other citizens of small means. Deeds of transfer in all these countries are brief and simple, and the whole process of land conveyance is easy and inexpensive.

The greatly improved condition of the Prussian people is directly due to their emancipation from the feudal bondage which still oppresses the masses in England. The peasantry of Saxony, too, are prosperous, pauperism being very rare among them. The agricultural labourer, both in Prussia and Saxony, can buy land at a reasonable price, and with the aid of his family increase his savings by raising produce. He is thus enabled to extend his holding until he advances to the position of an employer of labourers. But one has only to enter Bohemia, in which feudal land laws still prevail in order to realise the very different influence of the latter system on the population.

But China, most enlightened of all the nations on this question, has long been delivered from private landlordism and all its attendant evils to the greatest possible advantage of its teeming millions. After long and painful efforts extending from the third to the seventh century of the "Christian Era," the land of China was freed from the insupportable tyranny of individual ownership, and still remains the common property of the nation, and is available on the most reasonable terms to all who are willing to render it productive to the utmost. To understand aright the basis on which land nationalisation stands in China, it is necessary to consider the idea of humanity and its *solidarité* entertained by the people, and the grave responsibilities springing out of that idea which they regard as devolving upon them. They do not, as the inhabitants of Western Countries, view

humanity as grouped into separate and independent generations, past, present, and future. With my countrymen these divisions of the race are practically disregarded, so absorbing is their conception of the race as an indestructible and eternal unity, in respect to which birth and death, past, present, and future, are but trivial accidents. Indeed, one of their phrases strikingly illustrates the powerful hold this conception has upon them. Their supreme veneration is for ancestors, whom they solemnly and periodically worship. Ancestors are held to be entitled to their worship as a sort of apotheosis of parentage, on reverence for the claims, commands, and cares of which rests the entire social and national edifice.

They describe the present and future generations of their race as "the future antiquity"; and in consonance with this sentiment, which has all the strength of a second nature in them when a Chinaman receives the patent of nobility, as already stated, it is his ancestors, not his posterity, who are ennobled with him. This sense which they have of the unbroken continuity of humanity, and which lies at the root of the duties they recognise as owing to "the future antiquity," as well as the links of humanity which are in the past and the present is strikingly shown in a survival still to be met with in some parts of the country. Death is represented by a child, to whom they pay all the honours offered to the deceased whose place it fills as if he were re-incarnated. As an inseparable correlate of the idea I have explained, they hold that the earth does not belong to the living only, for they do not believe that the work by which an increased value is put on the land gives sole right of possession to it. They believe the living to be an ephemeral part of humanity, which has no right to spoil the good things come to them from the past, and therefore they disavow the right to use or abuse any portion of the land

which belongs to the whole community. The living are rather looked upon by Chinamen as trustees for posterity. Hence they formerly confiscated neglected lands. In reality, the only property in the soil known in China is the right to the fruits of it ; and it is only that right which can be transmitted or alienated.

This right is called in China *tienu-mienu*. The property of the land itself, known as *tienu-ti*, remains in the hands of the nation, as represented by the Government, which affirms its right in fixing a rent it alone can legally receive. When a landholder sells or lets an estate during part of the currency of tenure, the price paid never represents more than the value which he and his ancestors have by their labour put in it, and added to it. On the other hand, the State never claims the right to increase the rent in proportion as the value of the land is increased by the labour of the tenants.

The rent of the land has been established, not from its value, but from its area, and this, once fixed, has never been changed. This rent is nearly the only tax in China. The other resources of the Empire comprise the revenues from the Customs, mines, and salt monopoly. The Emperor's civil list is made up partly from the salt duties, from his mongolian flocks, and from the tribute paid by the vassals of China. "Such," writes a fair-minded old Consul of France in China, "is the respect for labour and for its products, that the State will not, on any consideration, augment the rent, nor create new taxes which may tend to diminish industry. It is true that the rent—be it little or much—is paid out of the produce of labour, and it is with this that the State has been able to carry out and maintain its great works, canals, sewers, &c., which have since permitted and facilitated the development of private labour."

While rent is fixed on the amount of area and not on the value of the land, the lands of the plains and the non-

irrigable mountain lands pay a smaller rent than those easily watered. Lands recovered from water are, for a while, exempt from taxation until they enter one of the four great classes, but there is no other principle of classification. Owing to climatic differences between the North and South of China, the State insists on crops being raised precisely suited to location, that the production of the North may balance those of the South. The Chinese State ministers its territory for the greatest good of the greatest number. It acts as a landlord, who, after dividing his building into floors, fixes his rent, according to the respective advantages of these floors, without troubling himself about the means or occupations of those to whom he lets them. The rent of land varies in a classification ranging from 7d. to 2s. per acre. This includes repairs of highways, land tax, and other payments. The average land rent, inclusive of one or two other incidental public payments, does not average over the whole population more than 2s. 6d. per head. When this small sum is paid, every Chinaman is absolutely free to undertake any form of industry or trade, and to go where he pleases. There are no taxes on doors or windows; no licence or excise, no police invasion of personal or domestic sanctity to be feared by law-abiding subjects. It is not surprising that he should religiously submit to pay this single tax, which is the instrument of securing his complete personal, social, and political freedom. All other taxes are considered by the Chinese as unlawful inroads on the rights of labour, and nothing astonishes them more than to hear that they exist in other countries.

As long as a tenant cultivates the land the State cannot demand from him a higher rent than the one which was originally fixed. If the tenant, for any reason, leaves the land, the State, as landlord, must pay him the increased value which his labour has added to it. The Chinese

system has the highly beneficial effect of facilitating access to the soil for those who are willing to work it themselves, while repelling those who wish to make it simply a medium of investment or speculation. As the impost is solely on the superficial area, the soil is depreciated in the hands of those who are idle proprietors, while its full value is maintained for those who personally farm it. The tax or rent is but a very small fixed charge paid by the tenant to the State, instead of an exorbitant rent paid by him to superfluous and exacting landlords. At the same time the benefit of whatever increased value has been added to the soil by his labour is assured to the occupant. Thus his industry is stimulated concurrently with the productiveness of the land, which is often made to produce several crops in the year, its value being augmented by £80 to £300 or £400 per acre.

The Chinese system attaches the inhabitants to the soil instead of alienating them from the culture of it and driving them into the towns, as the English system does. It is especially favourable to small proprietors. The estimated number of families in China is 90,000,000. If by this number the total area of the country—600,000,000 acres—is divided, the average extent of each holding is found not to exceed seven acres. There is, however, a large number of families who have only three acres, or only one acre. There are not many properties to be met with of more than 40 acres. Those of 200 acres are exceedingly rare, and there are scarcely any that exceed this in extent. In those provinces of China having an average population of 30 or 40 millions of inhabitants there are but three or four properties of 600 to 1000 acres. Throughout the country, as a whole, the most extensive farms scarcely exceed 24 acres.

Hardly a family exists in China without a patrimonial field, which is inviolable. The individual by whom any



intruder gains an entrance to it is guilty of sacrilege. So sacred are the hearths and homes of China deemed, that the governor or general who has allowed any of these to fall into the hands of the enemy commits suicide. His patrimonial field not only assures to each Chinaman his liberty, but prevents any return of despotism to the country. One of the sacred books of China contains the words: "The worship of Heaven has in view the spiritualism of earth." The Chinese are farther than any nation I know on the way to reach that end, the bulwark of their rights and liberties being this institution of the patrimonial field, inalienable and inviolable—no more capable of being sold than the people themselves are. It is on this basis that the house is erected. It is there the family vault is constructed, if they be rich enough to have one. There is the hall in which, twice a month, the family meet to celebrate the worship of their ancestors and to judge the faults committed by themselves. There are preserved the archives and civil registers. There are established for all the children of the family and the neighbourhood a school and a library. Every hamlet, every group of cottages, is a complete system. Yet everyone feels himself perfectly at home, as much isolated as he pleases, his own master, as proud of his home, as independent of the State and of his neighbours as the most powerful European lord was in the middle ages, while the Chinaman is more secure in his inviolable little cottage than the feudal chief was in his castle.

Nor is the landscape suggestive of bare utility. On the contrary, here and there, the gentle hill slopes are picturesque with the light and graceful foliage of bamboo groves. Everywhere are to be seen flowers in endless variety. Purple azaleas, rhododendrons, sweet-smelling gardenias, carpetted abrupt declivities, roses, chrysanthemums, and many other flowers, which are only known in

Europe as coming from China, adorn and perfume, at all seasons, the approaches to the cottages. In the songs to be heard in passing through the hamlets in the evening, there are never found the sad, resigned, and sometimes even despairing notes which too often mark the favourite airs of European workmen. The *Sin-fa*, the most popular song in China, is soft, breathing forth peace and security. In none of the national songs of China is there any trace of struggles with the implacable elements, the yoke of serfdom, or the tortures of religious gloom. For 1200 years at least have the people enjoyed a degree of quietude for which Europe will have a long time to wait, while the most correct public morals have been built up, assuring to one and all an amount of happiness from which, I fear, England is still a long way off.\*



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\* This view is fully corroborated by M. Eug. Simon, a distinguished Frenchman long resident in China.



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